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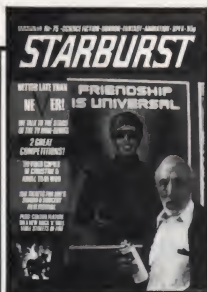


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Bill Murray is coming to save Sigourney Weaver next issue in

GHOSTBUSTERS

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FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Thanks for all the coverage I've been seeing in your pages about me over the years, which has seemingly detailed my life from birth to the present. I've learned things about me that even I didn't know! However, I would like to clear up one inadvertent error in your most recent issue (Starburst 71).

Although I am, indeed, credited on-screen as the editor of Steve Carver's *The Arena* (1973), this was more of an obscure New World in-joke than an actual credit. At the time it was common practice to anglicise the names of foreign crew members in the English language credits of imports from Italy, Spain, etc, and so Jon Davidson, New World's head of publicity, substituted my name in place of the actual Italian editor. Although I later did some editing on Carver's *Fast Charlie, the Moonbeam Rider* (1980) for which I declined a credit, I never really had anything to do with *The Arena*. I didn't even do the trailer! Or, as we would have put it in New World hyperbole: *Only Now, After Eleven Years, Can the True Story Be Told!*

Joe Dante,
Hollywood.

NEW FANTASY FEMALE

Starburst Editor Alan McKenzie said that there wasn't enough new blood around for a new season of Fantasy Females—but he has the perfect image of womanhood on his writing team. Dr Sally Gary, Queen of Trivia, can keep me in her filing cabinet any day!

Roderick Ramsay,
Dundee.

SHORT ROUNDS

Is the little Chinese kid called Short Round in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* the same little Chinese kid called Short Round in Sam Fuller's 1950 film *The Steel Helmet*? Or is Short Round just a common Chinese name?

Mike Matthews,
Manchester.

There's one in every crowd, isn't there?

JOIN THE CLUB!

Graham Williams's letter (Starburst 73) needs correction, please. Our *Prisoner E.P.* is available to our members within the official Appreciation Society, Six of One. Our new subscription year has just started and *Danger Man* will be included to coincide with the forthcoming Channel 4 screening of the original half hour episodes. The reason Graham might not have heard from ITC is that they refer all enquiries to us. For nearly eight years now ITC have generously provided all our copyright material on *The Prisoner* and *Danger Man*, free of charge, but it must be emphasised

Starburst LETTERS

Send all your comments and criticisms to:
Starburst Letters, Starburst Magazine,
Marvel Comics Ltd., 23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA, United Kingdom.



Danger Man coming to Channel 4? That's what the Prisoner Fan Club, Six of One, tell us. Patrick McGoochan looks stoic at the prospect.

sised that this is on a strictly non-commercial basis. Any one wishing to join can send an SAE for details to me, as the address you printed is no longer that of the Society.

Roger Langley,
Six of One
PO Box 66,
Ipswich IP2 9TZ.

Thanks for setting the record straight, Roger. We should own up to the fact that Roger also set us straight about the caption for *The Prisoner* picture which appeared on *SB73's* Letter Page. Number Six was, in fact, commiserating with Number Two who was unfortunate enough to be wearing a bomb around his neck, concealed in the badge of Office. Sorry 'bout that, folks.

FOR THE RECORD

I am writing to you to thank you for the video tape of *Twilight Zone - The Movie* which I received as a prize in connection with your recent competition. It will, I know, give me many hours of viewing enjoyment.

Also, regarding Graham Williams's letter in *SB73* concerning the London Weekend TV series *The Adventures of Don Quixote* and *Tales of Unease* theme music, I have a record containing both themes called 'Soundtrack TV Themes from London Weekend Television' on the old Marble Arch label (MALS 1359). *Don Quixote's* theme is a piece of music called 'Pegasus' by Mike Vickers and *Tales of Unease* is called 'Early Feary' by George Martin. The album was released in 1970. Graham may also like to know the theme from *The Prisoner* is available on the PRT album 'Greatest Science Fiction Hits Vol. 2' (NCP 702) by Neil Norman.

I hope this information is of use to Graham, and many thanks again for my prize.

Edward B. Evans,
Ellesmere Port,
South Wirral.

V - THE FINAL STRAW

So Kenneth Johnson wanted V to be realistic and not at all like *Battlestar Galactica*. After watching the first episode, I thought he'd succeeded in producing a tense drama series, but it soon became everything he said it wasn't going to be.

The major stumbling block in the series was the Visitors. The naughty Visitors spent all their time bitching each other, were poor shots, could not hear the Rebels sneaking up on them and they needed Robin's father's help to find the location of a Rebel base that didn't seem too well hidden.

The nice Visitors were a complete mistake. Their existence made the Rebels' escapes too easy.

I know alien habits would seem strange to us but I find it difficult to believe that members of the same race could both fall in love with us and treat us like cattle.

On the plus side, the special effects and the makeup were good.

John Rushworth, Keighley, W. Yorks.

All of which is fair enough, John, but consider one thing. There is absolutely no logical reason why an entire race of sentient beings would all hold exactly the same views about another sentient race. Is there?

V MERCHANDISING

I would like to enquire about the recently shown TV mini-series *V*. Is it possible to obtain any other merchandising, fanzines or whatever about it than the novel. If so, could you tell me where I could obtain these items?

A. J. Havery, London.

As far as we know, AJ, there isn't any other merchandising - at least none we've come across. Which is a shame, as we at *Starburst* were hoping to get our hands on a couple of those great 'plastic human costumes' all the *Visitors* wore!

V PRAISE

After experiencing five nights of thoroughly entertaining television in the form of the Warner Bros' *V*, I felt compelled to write to you about this truly smashing production.

Quite simply, the story of *V* had real punch. The horrific plans of the *Visitors* unfolded in a grippingly realistic way, with excellent special effects revealing the true nature of the *Visitors*.

Strong characterisation was very evident and the acting was of a particularly high standard. It was great to see Sarah Douglas in the Fantasy game again, and Jane Badler's ambitious Diana was quite simply phenomenal. Her argument against accepting one's own vulnerability, climaxing in the killing of Father Andrews was one of the most shocking scenes I had seen for a long while.

This mammoth production was to catch the audience unawares with unexpected twists and shock deaths of central characters. It surprises me therefore that *Starburst* has had little to say on the subject of *V*, as usually



V is also for Villains... The top baddies of the sf mini-series *V* line up for identification: Left to right, Richard Herd, Jane Badler, Andrew Pine and Peter Nelson. Behind them the object of their vile plans. Human beings, all trussed up and ready for the *Visitors'* dining room tables, stored in plexi-glass tubes. Nasty, eh?

your reviews of film and television productions appear some time before they hit our screens. I would like very much to know what your critics have to say on the subject, and sincerely hope they don't consider it pulp American entertainment parallel to *Galactica*.

V managed to put across a strong

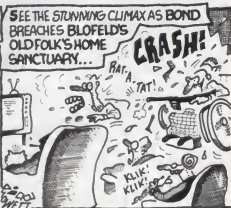
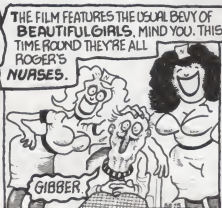
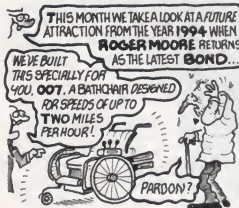
political message that was in no way pretentious or crude. That in itself is quite an achievement.

Nicholas Randall, Norwich.

Your letter, Nick was chosen from the many we've had on the subject of *V* because it reflected what most of our

readers had to say about Ken Johnson's enjoyable mini-series. In fact, the only derogatory views we've heard have been John Rushworth's letter (see above) and Bob Shaw's guest review on page 28. Our view was that *V* succeeded admirably in what it set out to achieve - to entertain!

Revenge of **FLICKERS** by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett



JIMBO FLASH

Having suffered enough in *Brainstorm* and *The Dead Zone*, Christopher Walken is now dealing out the tortures... The Oscar-winner – and *not* David Bowie – is the villain of the new 007 piece, *A View to a Kill*, currently making use of all the usual French tourist havens, from the Eiffel Tower to the Chantilly racecourse. The 14th Broccoli-Bond also has locations arranged in San Francisco, Iceland and Switzerland.

As mentioned before, Tanya Roberts, hot-foot from *Sheena's* jungles, is the top Bond girl. She's replacing another original Cubby Broccoli choice that got away – Priscilla Presley. She, of course, cannot escape the wooing of Bobby Ewing in *Dallas* even for a Bond movie. And yes, John Glen is directing. It's his third Bond in succession, equalling Guy Hamilton's 1971-74 record.

JIMBO QUIZ

Chris Walken is the youngest Bond badboy for... well, let's say some years. At first, I thought he was the youngest ever. I was wrong. Like Roger Moore, the equally wooden Walken just manages to maintain his looks... A one-time child actor, Walken is now 41. And that's seven years away from the average age of Bond villainy. Not even Bowie, at 37, would have proved the youngest (though he would have made Roger look the oldest Bond, that's for sure). That youthful record is owned by... But no! You tell me.

Have a go at this simple Bond Quiz (it has to be simple if it's Bond). Everyone's welcome to participate, except the house expert. So someone will have to gag John Brosnan!

1. Who's the youngest Bond villain? 2. Who was the oldest? 3. Which film won Walken his Oscar? 4. How old Roger Moore, anyway?

DANISH BREAK?

Will the next young director winning the Hollywood largesse of Spielberg be Danish? Could be. My Scandinavian spy, Keith Keller, tells me that Steven telexed Kaerne Film in Copenhagen for a cassette of this year's Danish entry at Cannes, *The Element of Crime*. This is the first feature from a bizarre, skin-head graduate of the Danish film school: Lars von Trier. His graduation film, *Images of a Relief*, was bought by Channel 4.

He has bags of talent, does von Trier. Except most of his luggage is marked: Orson Welles. Still, you have to be flash to make an impact from a little land like Denmark. He did that, all right. With his film, which kept winning extra, standing-room-only screenings at Cannes. With his mouth and a myriad of quotes such as, 'The hard-boiled old men with hearts of stone must die.' 'We won't settle for well-meaning films with a

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME



Above: A scene from the Marvel Comics adaptation of *The Muppets Take Manhattan*. As a bonus, American Werewolf director John Landis turns up in a small role in the movie (see "Acting Director I").

humanistic message: 'We want more – the real thing, the fascination, the experience – child-like and pure as true art. We want to go back to the time when love between film-maker and film was young, when the joy of creating oozed out of every frame.'

He shot his films in English with Michael Elphick and Esmond Knight. But for me, the real star of the piece was not von Trier (and he's that all right) but his cameraman, Tom Elling, using what I'm told is low-pressure sodium (sodium) lighting. This gives every frame a golden glow, with only occasional flashes of full colour – such as a cop-car's blue light – the most effective part of Lars von Trier's look-ma-no-hands debut.

CUTTING CORNERS I

Remember the great Oz row? No, not the one when Disney thought of replacing Walter Murch as director, which brought the movie-brats rushing to his aid. The row before that. When Disney nearly pulled out of the budget. Then, the money side was suddenly solved and shooting began. How'd they solve it? Easy! They knocked \$5 million off the budget by cancelling the locations in Italy, Sardinia, Canada, North Africa and Spain and settled for my old home instead – Wiltshire!

Well, plus Elstree studios, of course. So, like *Indiana Jones*, it's going to be another studio-ish film. No great harm in that. Where was most of *Close Encounters* made? Right!

After all the help from his friends, Murch has completed shooting the movie, by the way. The SPFX were still being shot last I heard, but all's going well.

NIGHTMARE CITY

Wes Craven has wrapped his long-awaited *Nightmare on Elm Street* in – where else but nightmare city, L.A. His cast includes Ronlee Blakely, hardly seen since *Nashville* in 1975; John Saxon, barely seen in anything worthwhile for ages; and a certain Heather Lagenkamp. Three companies are producing the film including Wes's Smart Egg Productions.

ACTING DIRECTOR I

Having lately turned David Cronenberg into an actor for his *Into the Night* film, John Landis pops up as an actor, himself, in *The Muppets Take Manhattan*. Frank Oz's other guests include Elliott Gould and Liza Minnelli.

ACTING DIRECTOR II

Steven Spielberg turned up in Landis' *Blues Brothers*. He's also in *Gremlins* and – if you don't blink – you might catch him, and Lucas, as a pair of missionaries in the *Indiana Jones* airport getaway scene. But now, Steven proves the real star of an odd movie

called *Room 666*. It's a documentary of sorts, by the West German director Wim Wenders. He shot it during the 1982 Cannes festival – the *E.T.* year. And indeed, I quoted some of Spielberg's comments in it at the end of my book. (We saw a lot of the film on tv in France the same year, you see.)

Wim invited most of the film-makers at the festival to drop into his hotel room. They found it empty, save for a tape-recorder, a 16mm camera and a television set, picture on, sound off. Plus a list of questions. The visitors arrived, one at a time, and could sit or stroll around the room – while answering Wim's queries, all about cinema. The invitees ranged from Antonioni to Fassbinder, Paul Morrissey to Wenders, himself. Best spokesmen for their art proved to be Jean-Luc Godard (no surprise in that) and Steven Spielberg.

It is, though, Wenders' compatriot, Werner Herzog, who delivers the best line about cinema vs. tv. "Television never absorbs you like a movie," he says. "You can't turn off cinema!"

WIM TRIES SF

And coincidentally, I'm sure, Wim Wenders is now preparing a science fiction film – in Australia. He first got the idea while hitching around the Central Desert in 1977, and noting how the terrain would suit an sf tale. His plans were then interrupted when Coppola invited Wenders to make *Hammett* for Zoetrope, after another Australia-fan, Nic Roeg, backed out. Since then, Wim has been trying to rescue his Coppolarised act and finally made good at Cannes this year with *Paris, Texas*. So now he's free to retrace his seven-year-old footsteps and choose his location sites for *The End of the Century*.

CUTTING CORNERS II

According to director Ivan Reitman, *Ghostbusters* is the quickie of the year. He shot it late last autumn although he hadn't even had a script ready by February. In all, he spent seven months only on the \$30 million comedy. "Usually," says Reitman, "something with that many SPFX would've taken twice the time." In that case, why doesn't he thank the SPFXers by naming them all, as per usual these days, in the credits. You must have noticed how small the list was. The reason? The movie toppled over-budget and Reitman and Co wanted to keep final costs down. They saved \$60,000 in keeping the main titles short! So how about it, fellas – now that the film's running second only to *Indiana Jones* and making a mint. From ticket sales and, natch, merchandising. Everyone wants something with the Casper-like logo on it. That cost Reitman, too. He had to settle out of court with the Filmmation animation folks who now own the Harvey Comics characters!



Above: Bald director Lars Von Trier directs his *Element of Crime* stars Michael Elphick and MeMe Lai (see "Danish Break"). Below: Harold Ramis, star and co-writer of the current US smash hit *Ghostbusters*. Don't miss Starburst's special *Ghostbusters* issue, coming next month.



SPFX BATTLE

Amusing sight in Paris, the other week. Britain SPFX ace Brian Johnson was let out of producer Christian Felchner's office down one flight of stairs, in case he saw Disney's *Baby* (dinosaur) maker Isidoro Raponi coming up the other stairs. Both guys were after the same job. I gather Raponi, one-time Rambaldi: side-kick, won. His prize? The French prehistoric fantasy-comedy, *Hatak!*

Stuntperson Paula Crist operates Raponi's *Baby*. It's a brontosaurus, actually. Or indeed, ten of 'em. They range from 30 ins long and 10ins high to 70ft long and some 25ft high, and come equipped in mechanical, radio-controlled versions and/or simply puppet heads for the close-ups. I expect we'll have more on Isidoro Raponi's *Baby* soon enough – especially as he'll be working on the French flick with our mate, Pascal Pinteau.

TERROR WITH AN R

Universal had to knuckle under and change the last reel of *Terror in the Aisles* to avoid the harsh X-rating they won last month and settle for an R. *Terror* is a *That's Entertainment* of horror flicks, compiled by Andrew Kuehn and Stephen Netburn of Kaleidoscope Productions. It started out as a routine notion to fill a videocassette with. It just kinda . . . grew. Now it has clips of everything from *Jaws II* and *III* to *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, from *Alien*, *Poltergeist* to *Carrie*, *Scanners*. Plus the best of Hitchcock (*Psycho*, what else?) and a chat from the suspense master.

Although none of the films excerpted – and introduced by Donald Pleasance and Mrs De Palma, Nancy Allen – ever earned an X-rating, the MPAA folk felt that the final reel was just too much. "An excess of violence," admits Andrew Kuehn. Not now. *Dawn of the Dead*, *Videodrome*, *The Fury* and *The Shining* have been replaced with gentler stuff. What I can only describe as Abbott and Costello *Meet Young Frankenstein*!

The original *Terror* will still be seen, though. At midnight matinees with the *Rocky Horror* folk and on the inevitable cassette. Meanwhile, having obtained rights to use clips from about 200 movies, Kuehn and Netburn feel a sequel is a distinct possibility. The score at half-time? Sixty down and 140 to go . . .

EXIT: TARKOVSKY

During May's Cannes festival, I collected from the Sovexportfilm stand, a booklet called *Presenting Russian Cinema*. A smart little volume full of facts and figures about Russia's 39 studios and 150 features a year – such titles as *Woodpeckers Don't Suffer From Headaches* and *A Dog Was Walking on the Piano*.

Continued on Page 38

THE WRITE STUFF

While talking with the husband and wife team of Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz, their report is not only writers, but as a couple comes through. In the way that they share their conversation, each one feeling comfortable in completing a sentence, or adding a thought to the other's comments, one can observe the process of collaboration, and imagine its application to their filmmaking chores.

Both native Californians, Katz and Huyck met while in college. While working for Francis Ford Coppola, they met George Lucas who entrusted them with the script of *American Graffiti*. Their other credits include *Lucky Lady* and *French Postcards*, which they also produced and directed.

Beyond *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, which they wrote, and *Best Defense*, which they co-wrote, produced and directed, 1983 also saw the development of another, more personal, production for Huyck and Katz—the birth of their first child, Rebecca.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom script-writers, Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz show, in this interview by Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficer, that they've got *The Write Stuff*.

Sterburst: Do you think that, if you were writing *Indiana Jones* now, after having a child, you would do anything differently?

Gloria KATZ: No, because I think that, even with the rating system as it stands now, that it really is up to parental discretion to decide whether a picture is too violent or not. I would probably not want an eight or ten-year old child to see the movie. But certainly, kids are so much more sophisticated now... I even think television is more violent than this movie.

Willard HUYCK: I think I'd be very conscious taking a kid to this movie, though. Hopefully you know your kid well enough to know what scares him and what doesn't. But, obviously, if the kid started to get scared, I'd leave.

Katz: It's really interesting. We bought our daughter a book called "The Haunted House". It's a big pop-up book and things come out of it. At first, she was too frightened to open it. Now, she absolutely loves it, but she's still looking at it from behind her hands, but she enjoys it. There is an element in a child that enjoys being afraid. It's so that you don't have to be frightened in real life, but you can be frightened in your fantasy life.

I really don't like violent movies. These slasher movies and all these things horrify me. But, because I thought of *Indiana Jones* in a not very realistic context, I see the violence as somewhat different. I don't think of it as street violence. It is a part of the fairy tale. Fairy tales are not antiseptic...

Huyck: It certainly was not intended to be violent.



So, when people have that reaction, I'm sad.

Katz: I never thought of the first picture as a non-violent movie. There is somebody's head blowing up at the end!

Huyck: I think it's not the violence as much as, perhaps, the fact that, once they go into the Temple of Doom, it's very claustrophobic and sombre, and the tone of the movie changes. I think it's the atmosphere around the violence that suddenly makes people say, "This is sort of grim". That was the intention. Steven wanted to make... Essentially, this was like the "Haunted House" at Disneyland rather than the "Jungle Land" ride, which was closer to the first movie. I think that maybe all this emphasizes the violence.

To me, the "open heart surgery" scene, which is obviously a violent notion, doesn't seem that violent because of the fact that the guy is watching and lives through the thing. I don't know... It's a thing where I think parents may be reacting more than kids would. I've heard some kids have been upset by it.

Katz: It's "fableistic" violence, and I've heard kids that haven't been disturbed by it at all. It's the kind of violence (she holds her hands up to her eyes) where you're looking through your hands as you're seeing the violence on the screen. I see so many pictures



that are so horrendously violent, that I think it's grossly unfair.

Huyck: I think it's the idea of children being whipped that upsets people, rather than what actually was shot. If you really examine the film, there are kids being whipped, but I think they're all in long shots.

Katz: But we had to create a villain, and that means the villains have to do bad things. They just can't say "I'm a villain, with a capital V". With Nazis, you didn't have to see what they were doing, because you know Nazis are bad. But here, you can't have a watered down villain. The audience has to see evil. Any kind of evil, I think... You have to show somewhat of what that evil is in order to have a convincing fable. I feel it's a problem with the ratings system, it's not a problem with the movie.

Starburst: It seemed to me that the violence was tempered by the changes in Indy's character... Did you set out to change Indy's character from the beginning? He was more caring in this one, doing things to help others instead of just for self-aggrandisement...

Huyck: Well, that's what we thought too... Originally, in both films, they had problems with the character, because they wanted him to be sort of a scoundrel a little bit. So, there's always questions about his archeology. Whether it's for profit or whether it's for science. But in this one, it was sort of a test of his character, and of what he would do at the end...

Katz: That's where we had that line, "Fortune and glory". We see that it's not important. It's more important for him to save this village. That's when he makes a clear-cut, moral decision. That was the intent from the very first story meeting. That was the thing that would unify his character through the whole...

Huyck: It all came down to a simple conflict as to whether he'd take in something that would make his career, and was obviously very valuable, or on the other hand, give it back to the village which needed it more than he did. ▶

Opposite page: The famine-struck Indian village of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. Top: Executive Producer George Lucas on location with Amrish Puri. Above left: Ke Huy Quan as Short Round. Left: Kate Capshaw as Willie Scott. Top right: Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones. Right: Indy the macho man!



THE WRITE STUFF



Above: "Hey you, come back with my shirt sleeve!" demands Indy. Below: Willie Scott is threatened by Indy in the Obi Wan nightclub. Facing page: Indy is mobbed by Indian Villagers.

Katz: And—I don't know if it comes across—we saw the decision of giving the stone back to the village, and restoring it to its former prosperity, as a really emotional scene. I think Steve did that very nicely. That certainly was the intent.

Starburst: That brings up the point that, since you were coming in to write a character that has obtained a "cult" status, did you think about that beforehand?

Katz: No, we didn't at all. When we talked to Harrison, he didn't think of it as a cult hero. But, he really has thought about the character of Indy a great deal, and we did go through the script from Indy's point of view with Harrison.

Starburst: He must have been happy to see the character humanised a bit more...

Katz: We tried to. I mean one of George's intentions from the beginning was to humanise the character. To show him having some growth, and also to do things in a somewhat different way. That's why we had the nightclub scene. So you don't start in the jungle, you start in a nightclub. You don't have a macho woman, but one with some fragility about her, that seems to be overwhelmed by this experience. So, we tried not to repeat the same pattern.

Starburst: There are also people that say that Willie's basic part in the whole thing is to scream. How do you feel about that?

Huyck: Well, I never really cared for the character very much in the first place. And, of course, you want to do something different... We felt that she was acting more realistically to the kind of things that Indiana Jones goes through. The kind of situations where, if she's not that tough—as most women or men wouldn't be in those situations—she'd scream.

Katz: I think I'm a little offended... People have very mixed feelings about Willie. I'm a little offended by the idea of the macho woman. I think that's a woman as conceived by men. I don't think that's a woman that necessarily, realistically exists. When you're covered by insects, your instinct is to scream! When





you're out in the jungle, you're not going to say, "I'm just thrilled to be out in the jungle, it's a warm and inviting place." So, I think in a way, Willie represents the audience's realistic point of view of what they would be like if they were normal persons thrown into a jungle. True, it's not the brave, strong woman, but it's a different kind of woman. And, I think, in certain respects, a more realistic one.

Starburst: Let's go back to the beginning. When were you contacted about *Indiana Jones*?

Huyck: It must have been in February of 1982.

Starburst: Was there already the bare bones of a story?

Huyck: Yes. We flew up to George's house with Steve, and spent four days there. In the first hour, George told us what he had in mind. Essentially, the story was starting in Shanghai and had Indy get into a situation where his plane crashes. Then, he's asked by a village to help them recover a sacred stone. That's the basic outline that George had, and we started building from there.

Starburst: Did it have *Short Round* in it at that time?

Huyck: No. *Short Round* is based on our dog. He's fifteen years old, and we named him after a character in a Sam Fuller movie, also named *Short Round*, who happened to be a little Oriental kid who was Korean.

Katz: The Sam Fuller movie with *Short Round* is named *The Steel Helmet*. I keep reading in the press that it is *China Gate*, which is another Fuller movie, but it's not so!

Huyck: Anyway, when we sat around trying to come up with the new characters' names, we said that since George got to name *Indiana Jones* after his dog, that Steve and us should be able to name our characters after dogs. So, Steve named Willie after his dog, and we named *Short Round* after ours!

Katz: *Short Round* really came out of the notion that George wanted a child in the movie. He wanted a girl child but we didn't like that idea too much, and Steve didn't feel comfortable with it either. So, we thought of the idea of *Short Round*, and then of his character. How he participated in the script developed out of the story conferences. Then, it grew some more as we wrote the script.

Huyck: Once we thought of *Short Round*, other odd things happened, like the notion that the Maharajah was a kid, and the notion that, not only had they stolen the rock, but they had stolen the children as well. Both sort of come together from the notion of *Short Round*.

Starburst: How many drafts did you do before you had a final?

Huyck: We did three real drafts, and then little rewrites after that. The first draft, we did very fast, in about six weeks, because we wanted to get something that we could all talk about immediately. Also, we wanted to keep Steve interested in the project...

Then, after that, we did two more drafts. I think the second one took about six more weeks, and the third one took about a month.

Katz: Then, we went off to do another project, *Best*

Defense, and Steve would call us continually to make changes. There were some budgetary restrictions, and there were some ideas that came to him as he went to the locations that he wanted incorporated into the script and developed.

Starburst: Did you have anything that you wanted in it and that you had to fight to get in?

Huyck: I'm trying to remember... I don't think there was anything that was cut that broke my heart...

Katz: No. Things were simplified, and they were usually simplified for the better.

Starburst: Can you talk a bit about the process of writing the opening scene?

Huyck: I think it was trying to start the movie in an improbable way. George and Steve both wanted to start it in mid-action, as the first one did. Basically, in the middle in an adventure that really doesn't have much to do with the rest of the film, so that it looks almost like the last part of the previous adventure. Then, we thought it would be fun if Indy showed up in a tuxedo, and Steve got a chance to do a Busby Berkeley number. And, it was also just a way of doing something that was maybe a little bit unexpected.

Starburst: Somebody had mentioned to me that two of the scenes were things that had been in the first film and weren't used. Is that so?

Huyck: The idea of the plane crash and then jumping out the door on the life raft had, at one time, been in the original.

Katz: And, the other thing was the mine car. I mean, ►

THE WRITE STUFF

► we never saw these scenes written, but I think George at one time had thought of a mine car race, for the first *Raiders*. But I don't know if it was ever written or what happened to it. He wanted a roller coaster ride. Then, of course, you're given the sequences, but you have to find a way to stick 'em in the story!

Starburst: Was the bug scene your idea or was it Spielberg's idea?

Katz: I think, actually, that George wanted a bug scene. Then we said that, given the idea that we're going to have a bug scene, here is how we are going to do it. We had long discussions about it—are bugs actually scary. I don't know if it's a primal fear or not...

Huyck: Somebody said that bugs weren't a problem for them. I forget who. Somebody said, "No, bugs aren't scary." But, with that amount of bugs, my God, how could they not be?

Katz: I just liked the idea that the floor was moving and they never knew why!

Huyck: Kate said none of those bugs were mechanical and I was amazed. I thought that those big grotesque ones were. But she said no, they were all real bugs that they got.

We had a boa constrictor scene that Kate couldn't do... They had the snake and they had trained it. For weeks in advance, she had been trying to psych herself up for this. She said she touched it, and the first time, it sort of undulated. And she thought she was going to die. She started sweating. Then, they

tried to put it on her shoulders to show her what it would be like, and she just totally freaked out. Steve, I guess, was sort of ashen and said, "That's all right".

Katz: It was a very funny scene because, obviously, there she is being strangled by a snake, and Indy is sort of standing there.

Huyck: So, they didn't do it. She just couldn't do it. So, that's when he said, "Okay, if you're not going to do this, there's no way you're not going to do the bugs!"

It happened just before the campfire scene, so it's sort of replaced by the thing with the elephant. When she tosses the snake away and Indy sort of backs off, that was a whole scene where Indy's trying to tell her what to do to get away from the snake without getting involved himself.

Starburst: One of the things that confused us in the film was the scene where we suddenly discover that the Maharajah is possessed. Was there ever a scene previous to that showing him to be under the Thugee's control?

Katz: Yes, there was a scene that was never shot. It's in the script...

Huyck: It was made more explicit when, during the dinner scene, he would look at the Prime Minister. Then, the Prime Minister actually went out into the garden, and you saw him talking to a sort of spectral figure, which later you found out was the High Priest. You only saw him in the distance. So, you realise there is more of a connection there...

Actually, in the original script—and I don't think they shot it, because the dinner sequence was long anyway—the Maharajah grabs Indy's whip and wants Indy to teach him how to use it. So, Indy does.

But in trying to use the whip, the little Maharajah hurts himself, and Short Round starts laughing. Then, they have a little scuffle, where the Maharajah grabs the whip. He and Short Round are very close to each other, and suddenly Short Round notices that the Maharajah's eyes start glowing. Nobody else in the room sees it. So, when Short Round brings it up to Indy, he thinks he's just being a silly kid. So, you did know, sort of, that the Maharajah was more into it.

Starburst: Something else that is interesting, is the fact that Short Round is never really rescued by Indiana. Short Round is the one that does the rescuing...

Huyck: That was deliberate. We thought it would be great to have a little Indiana Jones who saves Indy. He saves him in a number of situations. He claims to be Indy's bodyguard, and he's always there. The moment I like in the movie a lot is where Indy winks and says he's okay.

I think that Ke is one of those born actors. If you watch the movie carefully, he does the smallest little things totally naturally. I asked Kate if Steve had to give him a lot of direction, and she said no. He was just unbelievable. We saw the test, and by that point they had three little kids they were thinking about. This kid was so amazing...

Starburst: If Steven Spielberg didn't want to direct an Indiana Jones III, and if there is such a thing, would you be interested in directing and producing...

Huyck: I don't know. I've thought about that and I don't know. Maybe. I think it would be fun. If I did it, I think I'd do it as a copyst. I would try to direct it like a Spielberg movie.



A romantic interlude for Indy Jones and Willie Scott in this scene from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* as written by Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz.

THE MOST POWERFUL LEGEND OF ALL
IS BACK IN A NEW ADVENTURE.



CONAN

THE
DESTROYER 15

DINO DE LAURENTIIS Presents

by EDWARD R. PRESSMAN Production

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

by RICHARD FLEISCHER from "CONAN THE DESTROYER"

GRACE JONES • WILT CHAMBERLAIN • MAKO • TRACEY WALTER • OLIVIA D'ABO

and SARAH DOUGLAS Screenplay by STANLEY MANN Music by ROY THOMAS & GERRY CONWAY

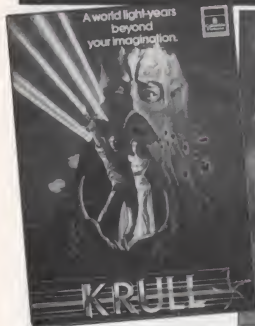
Music by BASIL POLEDOURIS Photographed by JACK CARDIFF "DAGGER" created by CARLO RAMBALDI Editing by STEPHEN KESTEN

Produced by RAFFAELLA DE LAURENTIIS Directed by RICHARD FLEISCHER

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FROM FRIDAY OCTOBER 19 AT A CINEMA NEAR YOU

10 KRULL VIDEOS TO BE WON



**VIDEO
COMPETITION
TOKEN**

RULES

The competition is open to all readers of *Starburst*, except employees of Marvel Comics Ltd and RCA/Columbia Pictures Video U.K. You may enter as many times as you wish provided each entry is accompanied by an entry stamp. All entries not bearing entry stamps will be disqualified. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. The competition closes on 3rd December, 1984. Entries postmarked any later than this unfortunately must be disqualified.

Krull, the thrilling Sword and Sorcery adventure has just been released by RCA/Columbia Pictures Video U.K. This epic fantasy film is set in "another time" on the distant planet of Krull – a world peopled by creatures of myth and magic.

This spectacular and colourful film is directed by Peter Yates, the acclaimed maker of *The Deep*, *The Janitor* (aka *Eyewitness*) and *Breaking Away*. *Krull* stars Ken Marshall as the heroic Prince Colwyn, and Lysette Anthony as Princess Lyssa who is kidnapped by The Beast and held captive in his black fortress. Veteran British actor Bernard Bresslaw is also featured, as The Cyclops.

The exciting story concerns the young prince's journey to a faraway cavern to recover the mystical Glaive, a key to extraordinary powers to defend his world, and to rescue his young bride. Along the way, he witnesses a wondrous array of sights and events, as he struggles to overcome the odds – and regain his kingdom.

Amazing visual effects and incredible stunts combine to make *Krull* a thoroughly spectacular film. A unique mixture of science fiction and fantasy which will appeal to all ages.

In a special feature issue we covered the making of *Krull* in *Starburst* 52, and now, in association with RCA/Columbia Pictures Video U.K., we are pleased to offer you the chance to win one of ten copies of this film on video. In this easy-to-enter competition all you have to do is answer the questions below, attaching the entry stamp, and submit them to us at:

**Krull Video Competition,
Starburst Magazine,
Marvel Comics Ltd,
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.**

Include with your entry your own name and address and desired video format.

Closing date: 3rd December, 1984.

QUESTIONS:

1. Peter Yates, director of *Krull*, previously made *The Janitor*. Who played the title role in this thriller?
a) Nick Nolte
b) Eddie Murphy
c) William Hurt
2. *Krull* features stop-motion effects by Stephen Archer. Which recent film did this animator work on?
a) *Company of Wolves*
b) *Dreamscape*
c) *The Never Ending Story*
3. The Cyclops in *Krull* is played by Bernard Bresslaw. In which comedy-horror film did Bresslaw play Sockett the Butler?
a) *The Monster Club*
b) *Carry on Screaming*
c) *Young Frankenstein*

This year John Carpenter (director of *Halloween*, *Escape From New York* and *The Thing*) turned Stephen King's best-selling novel, *Christine*, into a major motion picture. The chilling story of a demonic car with the power to possess her young owner, *Christine* is a terrifying tale of horror and insanity.

Shot on location in South California, and with a superb musical soundtrack of 14 rock 'n' roll songs, *Christine* stars Keith Gordon as Arnie Cunningham, the teenager who is inexplicably taken with the rusty old '58 Plymouth and becomes the object of the car's horrifying wrath. Other young newcomers featured in the film include Alexandra Paul and John Stockwell as Arnie's friends, with William Ostrander as Buddy the school bully, and a guest appearance by Harry Dean Stanton as Police Inspector Junkins.

The year is 1978, and Arnie sees the car for sale in the yard of an old house. From this moment, the decayed and cankered car seduces him with unyielding tenacity, until he is consumed with an irrational passion for her sleek, rounded chrome-laden body. Arnie's friends watch helplessly as *Christine* envelops the teenager, becoming his obsession. She demands of him complete and unquestioned devotion and when Arnie's enemies cause interference they quickly become objects of *Christine*'s deadly anger.

Christine is all about teenagers, rock music, and America's love affair with the automobile. This creepy thriller is now available on RCA/Columbia Pictures Video U.K.

In another incredible Starburst competition we are offering ten video copies of *Christine*, courtesy of RCA/Columbia Pictures Video U.K. Just answer the questions below, attaching the entry stamp, and submit them to us at: Christine Video Competition, Starburst Magazine, Marvel Comics Ltd, 23 Redan Place, London W2 4SA.

Include with your entry your own name and address and desired video format.

Closing date: 3rd December, 1984.

Note to parents: *Christine* is an 18 certificate film.

QUESTIONS:

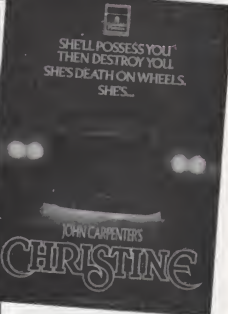
1. *Christine* is based on the book by Stephen King. Which of the following films was not an adaptation of one of his novels?

- a) *The Burning*
- b) *The Shining*
- c) *The Dead Zone*

2. Harry Dean Stanton plays a Police Officer investigating a series of bizarre hit-and-run murders in *Christine*. In which of the following science fiction films did he appear?

- a) 2001 - A Space Odyssey
- b) *Blue Thunder*
- c) *Alien*

10 CHRISTINE VIDEOS TO BE WON



3. The director of *Christine* is John Carpenter, who became a recognised American filmmaker after directing *Halloween* in 1978. Which film was made by Carpenter before the success of *Halloween*?

- a) *American Graffiti*
- b) *Assault on Precinct 13*
- c) *Friday the 13th*

RULES:

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nied by an entry stamp. All entries not bearing entry stamps will be disqualified. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. The competition closes on 3rd December, 1984. Entries postmarked any later than this unfortunately must be disqualified.





Above: Hero Tom Cody (Michael Pare) makes short work of several police vehicles with his trusty shotgun. Below: A tender moment between old lovers, Cody and Ellen (Diane Lane). Opposite top: Michael Park as Tom Cody. Opposite below: Diane Lane as Ellen Ain, rock superstar. Opposite far right: The bikers, led by Raven (Willem Defoe), cruise the Streets of Fire.

Feature by Roger P. Birchall

As far as Rock 'n' Roll movies go *Streets of Fire* is something else.

Director Walter Hill describes, and indeed defends *Streets of Fire* as "A Rock 'n' Roll Fable where the Leader of the Pack steals the Queen of the Hop and the Soldier Boy comes home to do something about it." The film contains all the classic elements of a 1950s American exploitation picture, all brought stylistically up to date with stunning cinematography. All the popular youth culture of a romantic bygone age is on display here: custom cars, motorcycles, gang rumbles and rock 'n' roll. All the elements Hill claims to have great affection for, making *Streets of Fire* his most personal film to date.

This is Hill's seventh film as director, but his name is also well known by *Starburst* readers as a co-writer and producer of Ridley Scott's science fiction blockbuster, *Alien*. His last film was the hard-hitting, fast-moving action/comedy *48 HRS.*, starring Nick Nolte and shooting Eddie Murphy to fame. Hill is now working on his fifth film with *Streets of Fire* producers Lawrence Gordon and Joel Silver, *Brewster's Millions* starring Richard Pryor.

Walter Hill started out in Hollywood as Assistant Director on such movies as *Bullitt* (1968), *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968) and *Take the Money and Run* (1968). It was while working on the latter film that he wrote his first screenplay, *Hickey and Boggs*, a comic thriller directed by Robert Culp in 1972. His next script was for *The Thief Who Came to Dinner* (1972), a caper movie starring Ryan O'Neal as a computer expert who becomes a jewel thief. Sam Peckinpah directed Hill's next screenplay, *The Getaway* (1972), a fast-moving action picture with lots of double-barrelled violence it starred Steve McQueen and Ali MacGraw. In 1973 he adapted Desmond Bagley's novel, *The Freedom Trap*, for the screen, which was directed by John Huston as *The Mackintosh Man* starring Paul Newman and James Mason.

The real turning point in Hill's cinema career came in 1975 when he made his directorial debut with *Hard Times*, based on a screenplay co-written with Bryan Gindoff. The film was released in Britain as *The Streetfighter*, and starred Charles Bronson in the title role with James Coburn as a streetwise hustler. *The Drowning Pool* (1975) starring Paul Newman was Hill's next film involvement, but only as a co-scripter.



The Driver (1977) was a success for Walter Hill as a director, and was the first film to display his distinctive gritty style. Ryan O'Neal starred in the title role, with Bruce Dern as "The Detective" and Isabelle Adjani as "The Player".

Hill's next film as writer/director was the tough action picture *The Warriors* in 1978. The movie's comic strip style violence gave it a label of controversy which made it a sensational moneymaker at the box-office. *The Warriors*, with its striking photography of the nocturnal neon-lit streets and subways of New York and its dazzling gang fight sequences, was in many ways a direct forerunner to *Streets of Fire*. The female lead of *The Warriors* was Deborah Van Valkenburgh who plays Reva in *Streets of Fire*.

Next Hill worked with co-writer David Giler on *Alien*, adapting an original script by Dan O'Bannon for the screen. Ultimately, after wrangles with O'Bannon and the Screen Writers' Guild, Hill was just credited as Producer.

In 1980 Hill tackled the historic tale of the infamous James Brothers directing *The Long Riders*, scripted by Bill Bryden, Steven Phillip Smith, Stacy Keach and James Keach. Starring the Keach brothers, the three Carradines (David, Keith and Robert) and the Quaidi (Dennis and Randy) the film was not a commercial success, due to the lack of interest in westerns at the time.





STREETS OF FIRE

► Keith Carradine was one of the stars of Hill's next film, *Southern Comfort* (1981), a gritty story of a group of soldiers hunted down by Indians in the Louisiana Swamps. The tightly directed atmospheric thriller featured an all-male cast.

Prior to *Streets of Fire* Hill made *48HRS* with many of the same production team, including his first collaboration with writer Larry Gross. Hill and Gross are currently involved in writing their third script together.

Music has always played a great part in the success of Walter Hill films. *The Warriors* featured an energetic disco rock soundtrack, and the haunting scores for both *The Long Riders* and *Southern Comfort* were composed by Ry Cooder, the renowned song interpreter, instrumentalist, musicologist and arranger, who also wrote the music for *The Border*. Cooder composed and, with his band, performed much of the background music in *Streets of Fire*. The film also features ten original songs, plus an appearance by the feverish L.A.-based recording group, The Blasters.

Record industry heavyweight Jimmy Iovine produced five of the numbers for *Streets of Fire*, including two written by Jim Steinman. *Nowhere Fast* and *Tonight Is What It Means To Be Young*. These two songs bookend the film, and in fact the whole of *Streets of Fire* seems to be primarily structured around the music. Ellen Aim and The Attackers (played by Diane Lane and the Boston-based group Face to Face) blast out *Nowhere Fast* for the concert sequence which opens the film. And then for the finale they are joined by a four-man black singing group, The Sorels, to perform *Tonight Is What It Means To Be Young*. Both the opening and closing numbers are done before an audience of 500 background players, filmed on location at L.A.'s Wilshire Theatre.

Of the other three songs Jimmy Iovine produced for the film, *Sorcerer* is by Steve Nicks, *It Could Never Be You* is by Tom Petty, and *I Can Dream About You* is by Dan Hartman.

The Sorels (played by Stoney Jackson, Grand Bush, Robert Townsend and Mykel T. Williamson) sing Kenny Vance's *Countdown to Love* "a cappella" on a bus, and later perform

the Dan Hartman song, *I Can Dream About You*.

In a sleazy nightclub, Torchie's, The Blasters perform *One Bad Stud*, an old Leiber-Stoller song, and *Blue Shadows* written for the film by Phil and Dave Alvin.

In addition to composing the musical score, Ry Cooder wrote two songs for the film, *Hold That Snake and You Got What You Wanted* performed by The Ry Cooder Band, who also perform Bob Seger's song *Get Out of Denver*, Link Wray's *Rumble*, and Duane Eddy's *First Love, First Tears*. During the closing credits The Fixx perform a new song, written for the film, entitled *Deeper and Deeper*.

The (very) basic story of *Streets of Fire* concerns Tom Cody (Michael Paré), a young adventurer whose former girlfriend, Ellen Aim (Diane Lane), a beautiful young rock singer, is kidnapped at a concert. To rescue her, Cody returns to his home district, and aided by his sidekick McCoy (Amy Madigan), and the singer's manager, Billy Fish (Rick Moranis), invades enemy territory.

The cast are mostly young and relatively unknown. Walter Hill believes "When you make a film, there's nothing more important than casting properly." He heard about Michael Paré, the lead in *Streets of Fire*, from the same agent who told him about Eddie Murphy. Paré plays Tom Cody, an ex soldier who is tall, handsome and strong. A real hero. Hill says, "Michael had the right quality. He was the only actor I found who was right for the part—a striking combination of toughness and innocence."

With *Streets of Fire* Michael Paré now has four pictures under his belt. Awaiting release are *The Philadelphia Experiment* (see *Starburst* 74) and an Australian film called *Undercover*. He played the lead of Eddie in his first film last summer, *Eddie and the Cruisers*.

19-year old Diane Lane plays beautiful rock singer Ellen Aim. In 1983 she appeared with Matt Dillon in two films directed by Francis Coppola, *The Outsiders* and *Rumble Fish*. After completing *Streets of Fire* she went to New York to co-star with Richard Gere in another Coppola movie, *The Cotton Club*.

Rick Moranis makes his dramatic screen debut as the rock singer's aggressive young manager, Billy Fish. Moranis has done American TV comedy and is soon to be seen with Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd in *Ghostbusters* (covered next issue), as well as *The Wild Life* and *The Breakfast Club*.

The role of McCoy, Tom Cody's sidekick and drinking buddy, is played by Amy Madigan. Cast as the villainous Raven, leader of the outlaw gang The Bombers, is Willen Dafeo (who had a similar role of a biker in *The Loveless*—a film from which *Streets of Fire* borrows part of a line for a song title: "We're going nowhere—fast"). Deborah Van Valkenburgh (from Hill's *The Warriors*) plays Reva, Cody's sister, and the role of Price, the police captain is played by Richard Lawson (seen in *Pottergeist*).

As with *The Warriors*, much of the filming for *Streets of Fire* was done at night. Exteriors were filmed on the rain-drenched streets of Chicago, and then moved to L.A. where it was filmed in various parts of the city, including two weeks at a soap factory in Wilmington, California.

About half of the filming took place at Universal Studios. The production team made use of the famous huge tarped-in street set. With 95 poles, each 65 feet apart, the tarpaulin operated much like a motorised swimming pool cover, allowing filming of night scenes in daylight without the intrusion of the Southern California sun. Sort of like filming under the Big Top. It is now a permanent feature at Universal. "It happens to be the world's largest enclosed set," says cinematographer Andrew Laszlo. "It was so large, we had high speed auto chases under the tarp."

Production Designer John Vallone and his team added an elevated subway train line on the backlot at Universal Studios which perfectly matched the train interiors filmed in Chicago.

As in many Walter Hill films (*The Driver*, *The Warriors*, *48HRS*) wheels and movement figure prominently. *Streets of Fire* is no exception. There is a maroon convertible confiscated by Michael Paré from a gang known as The Roadsters early in the film. Twelve of the famous American Studebakers are used as police cars in *Streets of Fire*. Also featured are more than 50 motorcycles ridden by the outlaw gang, The Bombers (the bikes and their drivers were chosen from various L.A.-based bike clubs).

Streets of Fire, despite its recycled images and trends of past popular American culture, is unlike anything you've ever seen. *Streets of Fire* is a Rock 'n' Roll adventure that races across the screen. *Streets of Fire* is *The Warriors* meets *The Wild One*. *Streets of Fire*, under the direction of Walter Hill, is a true original. ■

SWORD & SORCERY

COMPETITION

We are pleased to announce an upcoming festival of magical Sword and Sorcery films due to be screened in parts of Britain later this year. Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment have put together a spectacular programme of five big fantasy movies to astound and thrill cinemagoers of all ages. Each film is due to be shown at

cinemas all round the country on one day per week only (all Thursdays).

The programme swings into action on 8th November, with the lively animated adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic fantasy novel, *The Lord of the Rings* (PG). The week after on 15th November is the highly entertaining adventure, *The Sword and the Sorcerer* (15). Following

that is the much under-rated fantasy, *Dragonslayer* (PG), on 22nd November. A week later on 29th November the mighty Conan the Barbarian (15) dominates the screen. The fantasy epic *Krull* (PG) (see *Starburst Video Competition* on page 14) closes the festival on 6th December.

The festival has the suitably grand title, *Of Wizards and Dragons, Swords and Sorcery*. It is the first of its kind, and gives you the chance to see these spectacular films as they should be seen... on the big screen.

This unique event is scheduled to take place at the following ABC/EMI cinemas on the dates above:

London (Edgware Road, Bexleyheath, Ealing, Enfield, Putney, Catford, Watford (Empire)), Brighton, Bristol (Whiteladies), Cambridge, Cardiff, Coventry, Dundee, Exeter, Glasgow, Hanley, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Newcastle (Westgate Road), Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford (George Street), Reading, Southampton, York and Birmingham (Futurist).

As supporting programmes may vary, please check with Cinema or see local press for programme times.

Starburst, in association with Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment, has 150 free Guest Tickets to give away in this fabulous easy-to-enter competition. For your chance to win free entry to any one programme of your choice at the cinema of your choice all you have to do is fill in the gaps of the titles of three famous fantasy films listed below. To make it even easier we are supplying you with clues as to the movies' titles. Just send your answers to reach us no later than 1st November, and submit them to us at: Sword and Sorcery Festival Competition, Starburst Magazine, Marvel Comics Ltd, 23 Redan Place, Bayswater, London W2 4SA.

Include with your entry your own name and address, and attach the entry stamp printed here.



_ I _ F _ O _ _ A _ H _ D _ D

A classic tale of Arabian Nights that starred Conrad Veidt and Sabu in 1940.

W _ Z _ _ D _

An animated fantasy, directed by Ralph Bakshi, which used the "Rotoscoping" technique.

_ L _ A _ _ _ F _ H _ T _ T _ S

A spectacular tale, featuring Ray Harryhausen's animated monsters, straight out of Greek mythology.

Rules:

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entry stamp will be disqualified. The judges decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. The competition closes on 30th October, 1984. Entries postmarked any later than this unfortunately must be disqualified.

TOKEN



Starburst DATA BANK

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary



G'day! Welcome to the first *Data Bank* in glowing technicolor. I've managed to find some questions which give the opportunity to print some great pics from my legendary Filing Cabinet. But space is short, so fasten your seat-belts...

1. UGLY MUGS

Janice Johnstone of Purley, Surrey is looking for information on an early 70s horror movie called *The Mutations*. She seems to remember an ex-*Doctor Who* star Tom Baker in the film but little else.

To be sure, Janice, there's not much to say about this one. It came out in 1973, received terrible reviews, then disappeared again. I don't think it's been shown on tv (unless anyone out there knows better!). Cast: Donald

Pleasance (as Dr Nolte), Tom Baker (Lynch), Julie Ege (Heidi) plus a bunch of other folk I've never heard of. Credits: Dir: Jack Cardiff (who returned to cinematography soon after). Scr: Robert D. Weinbach, Makeup: Charles Parker. Great makeup, shame about the movie!

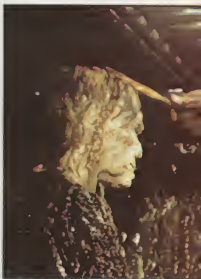
2. KARNSTEIN QUERY

John Gates from Carlisle, Cumbria is a Hammer fan and collector of obscure trivia about British horror pictures. He's come up with a real humdinger of a question which I have to admit, shame-facedly, I can't answer: Who played the sacrifice victim carved up by Count Karnstein on Carmilla's tomb in *Twins of Evil* (1971)? I'm sure one of the readers will know the answer to this one, John. And just to help jog memor-

ies out there, I've included a neat colour photo of the mystery victim, all trussed up and ready to resurrect everyone's favourite female vampire, at Top Centre. Don't think I can do much more than that.

3. 'NUTHER KARNSTEIN QUERY

Still with John Gates - I ought to know when to call quits - I'm asked "Whatever happened to Mike Raven, who played Count Karnstein in 1973's *Lust for a Vampire*?" I got a little further with this one. Mike Raven, real name Austin Churton Fairman (which I think I prefer!), was born in 1927 and after a stint as a BBC Radio Disc Jockey (no really!) turned to acting in horror films. He has a keen interest in the occult, which



explains his single-mindedness in choosing his movie vehicles. His film appearances are as follows: *Lust for a Vampire* (as Count Karnstein, see picture at Top Right), *Crucible of Terror* (1971), *I, Monster* (1971), *Disciple of Death* (1973, which he starred in, wrote and co-produced). I also found a reference which credited Raven with an appearance in a 1972 horror movie called *Grave of the Vampire*, but I was unable to confirm this.

4. HIS NAME IS SMITH

Here's a real puzzler from Brian Williamson of East Kilbride in Scotland. He's convinced he read somewhere that makeup wizard Dick Smith worked on the 1954 classic sf thriller *Them!* and wants to know just what it was that Smith contributed to the movie.

I knew that Smith *hadn't* worked on *Them!* as he worked exclusively for television from 1946 until his first feature film, *Requiem for a Heavyweight* in 1962. What I did find out was that Dick Smith *did* indeed design and build



the giant ants for *Them!* director Gordon Douglas – but it was a different Dick Smith. See? You live and learn.

But I don't want you to leave empty handed, Brian. So for you, and for a few other readers who have asked, notably 14 year old James Webster of Hampton Poyle, Oxfordshire, here's a listing of the great (makeup) Dick Smith's fantasy credits.

House of Dark Shadows (1970), *The Exorcist* (1973), *The Stepford Wives* (1974), *Burnt Offerings* (1976, uncredited), *The Sentinel* (1977), *Exorcist II: The Heretic* (1977), *The Fury* (1978, uncredited), *Altered States* (1980), *Scanners* (1981), *The Fan* (1981), *Ghost Story* (1982), *The Hunger* (1983).

Incidentally, the picture I've selected of Dick Smith shows him fiddling with the dummy of Alice Kreig found in a submerged motor car in *Ghost Story*.

5. HER NAME IS SMITH

Fantasy female fan Roger Collier wants a filmography of his favourite actress



Madeleine Smith. Born in 1950, our Maddy has appeared in a host of British tv shows, too numerous to go into here (besides, it'd take a month of Sundays to research, and you did ask for a filmography, Rog). Her fantasy credits are limited to: *The Vampire Lovers* (1970), *The Devil's Widow* (1972, anyone ever seen that?), *Theatre of Blood* (1973), *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1973), and Maddy is featured in a still from the movie here with



Shane Briant, Peter Cushing and a squishy brain), *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977). That's all I have. Next!

6. MAX'S WHEELS

There's one in every batch, isn't there? Full-time motorhead Bill Celino of Wolverhampton is really keen to know what kind of car my favourite fantasy male Mel Gibson drives in *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2*. This is either easy or

hard depending on what you mean, Bill. In the film the car is referred to as the (Australian accent) "Last of the V8 Interceptors". But somehow, I don't think that was what you were looking for. I'll bet you want to know what sort of car the film-makers used. If that's the case, then I'm in trouble. Cars are not my strong point. I've included a picture of the car here in the hope that somebody with more knowledge of the subject can tell us, though as an educated guess, I'd say Miller and Co probably built the car from scratch or merely based it on an existing car but customised it to the point of unrecognisability. Nice car, huh? ■

Send all your trivia questions to:
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August, this year, saw the most recent of the Fanderson conventions, the annual get together of the fan clubs dedicated to the old Gerry Anderson television series. Even though *Terrahawks* did not prove to be as successful as everybody hoped, Anderfans around the country still become deeply nostalgic over such series as *Stingray*, *Captain Scarlet* and *Thunderbirds*. Unfortunately, as far as the old shows are concerned, a number of years ago Lew Grade's ATV Company bought all the rights to Anderson's puppet series, including *Thunderbirds*, which means they can do whatever they like with them.

Remember those dreadful video specials? Each one contained additional laser effects, shoddy background music and garish credit sequences. Dispicable attempts at keeping the spirit of the original and failing miserably. However if that wasn't bad enough, ATV and their international ITC company decided to follow it up with a new space series capitalising on the old *Thunderbirds* format.

THE ALTERNATIVE THUNDERBIRDS

It seems that the Japanese, who excel in tv animation programmes, produced, a few years ago, a series entitled *Techno-Voyager*. Consisting of 18 half hour episodes it must be noted that the stories borrowed heavily on Gerry Anderson's original formula. However, the show failed to enthral the high-tech orientals, who were happier dis-assembling their multi-coloured robot toys based on other more successful animated characters. ITC, meanwhile, began to sit up and take notice. Their New York office realised the potential in buying up the series for screening on American Saturday morning tv. Without knowing the exact cost, it would be fair to assume that they got it relatively cheap, but I'm afraid the story doesn't end there.

They immediately expanded the format into 24 half hour episodes, adding a variety of computer graphics and new credits sequences calling the revamped series *Thunderbirds 2086*. The stories now centred around a rescue organisation call (yes, you've guessed it), *International Rescue*. With their usual flair for publicity ITC produced an enormous full-colour brochure with which to sell the programme to foreign markets. It told in detail the story behind *International Rescue*, its brave operators and their fabulous *Thunderbird* craft, totalling 17 different designs. Some of this exaggerated hyp read as follows:

"In direct response to the dangers of our advanced technology, we have developed an organisation that is ready to mobilise dramatic survival resources at a moments notice, to spearhead dangerous missions, and to answer last chance distress calls that can arrive any time from any disaster scene on or off this planet. That organisation is *International Rescue*. The specialised squad is the *Thunderbirds*. A team that combines five of the finest cadets in the

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss



Above: The Terrahawks team, (l to r) Dr "Tiger" Ninestein, Lieut Hiro, Capt Kate Restrel, Hawkkeye and Capt Mary Falconer. Below: The "beautiful" Zelda from Terrahawks.



world, chosen for their physical and intellectual abilities, dedicated to the service of Mankind wherever he may be in distress with a dazzling array of vehicles and equipment designed to specifications as yet unconceived in the space-age technology of the 21st Century. The Earth base Command Centre is located on a remote island in the Pacific." (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?). Character names are as follows:

Dr Warren Simpson, chief engineer and designer of *International Rescue* and former NASA astronaut; Dylan Beyda, son of the famous space explorer, Harrison Beyda and Captain of TB-1; Gran Hansen, senior officer of TB-1; Jesse Rigel, born on the moon but raised in Texas, now co-pilot of TB-2; Kallan James, Olympic swimmer and pilot of TB-4; Jonathan Jordan Jr, graduate of New York University and co-pilot of

TB-2; and lastly Paul "Skipper" Simpson, only 7 years old, hopes to be a space explorer and regularly attends the third grade at the Arcology Elementary School.

The craft that they are responsible for consist of an advanced Space Shuttle TB-1, length (L) 62 metres; *Hypersonic Transport* TB-2, L 83 metres; *Reconnaissance Ground Vehicle* TB-3, L 46 metres; *Submarine* TB-4, L 45 metres; *Special Ground Operations Vehicle* TB-5, L 29 metres; *Space Station* TB-6, L 15 kilometres; *Mini-Aircraft* TB-7, L 12 metres; *Computer Controlled Air-Transport* TB-8, L 15 metres; *One-Man Space Walkers* TB-9, L 3.5 metres; *Ultra-high-Speed Mini-Rocketship* TB-10, L 18 metres; *High-Speed Ground Vehicle* TB-11, L 5 metres; *Multifunction Flat Bed* TB-12, L 15 metres; *Flying Mini-Sub* TB-13, L 9 metres; *Deep Sea Bathyscope* TB-14, L 12 metres; *Mobile Computer* TB-15, L 4.5 metres; *The Mole* TB-16, L 6 metres and a *Long-Range Space Probe* TB-17, L 200 metres.

In support of the series ITC even marketed a Christmas 1983 annual. This was either done to stimulate interest in the show or to cash in on the success of Anderson Burt's *Terrahawks* annual. The sad conclusion to all this super-hype is that ITC were hoping to make a lot of money out of what is essentially, a cheaply made, limited-animation series, and using the title of a far superior programme as the chief selling point. The series is also typical of recent Japanese fare, ornate backgrounds but dull plots and tediously overlong sequences.

TREKKIN' ON

But enough of that, on to the subject of *Star Trek*. I recently met up with *Star Trek* supporter Beryl Stevenson and now that the series is gaining a whole new audience among SF fans (I thought *Trek 3* was excellent, by the way) readers of *Starburst* might like to have a few addresses of the various *Star Trek* fanclubs. First of all, Wendy Holt of the *New Enterprise Fan Club* would very much like to hear from you. Her address is 21 Lilac Avenue, Carvery Island, Essex SS8 8BQ. Please enclose a stamp addressed envelope. Other groups are as follows:

Star Trek Action Group (membership £3). Write to Lesley A. Wood, Fallow Lane, Whitley, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 0NJ.

Starship Excalibur (membership £2). Write to Martin D. Pay, 23 Langton Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2BW.

Empathy. Write to Carol Keogh, 45 Welby House, Hazellville Road, London N19.

I'm also indebted to Beryl for information on two future convention dates. The first is *Midcon '84*: 12/14 October 1984. Post House Hotel, Leicester. Info (SAE) from Terry Elson, 8 Ennerdale Close, Oadby, Leicester LE2 4TN, and the second is *SOL III* '85 3/6 May 1985. Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Information available from 39 Dersingham Avenue, Manor Park, London E12 5QF enclosing an SAE.

V

Regular readers of *Starburst* will remember our interview with "V" writer/director/producer Kenneth Johnson back in issue 66. At the time, the first "V" mini-series had not been scheduled for airing on British television and there were no signs from either of the tv networks that it would be.

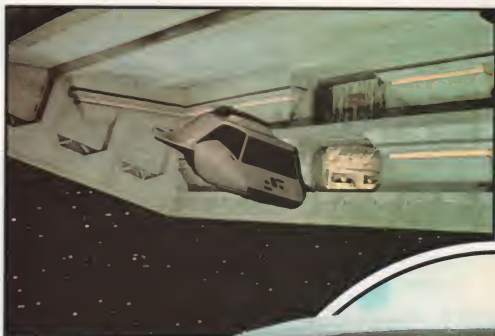
The sequel, "VII" came and went on American tv – and still no sign of the show on domestic television. Then, when Britain's commercial network channel pulled out of covering the Olympic Games last August at the last minute, something had to be found to fill the suddenly vacant air-time. What they found was "V"...

Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier visited the "VII" set, interviewed members of the cast and crew and delivered their article which we intended to print after "V" was aired here. But ITV out-foxed us and transmitted the shows consecutively – so much for our planning! So, better late than never, *Starburst* presents a feature on the making of "VII".

Last May, NBC aired in the United States a highly successful, four part mini-series called "V". The show told, in realistic detail, the story of the arrival of alien visitors on Earth, and of their eventual domination over Mankind through the use of media manipulation and terrorism.

Towards the end of the programme, the Visitors' true nature and purpose were revealed: they were reptilian creatures masquerading as humans and they had come to Earth to steal our water and use the human race for food! Fortunately, a group of resistance fighters, led by actors Marc Singer and Faye Grant, had sprung up. "V" ended leaving many unanswered questions for the viewers to ponder, including the fate of one of the women characters who had been made pregnant by one of the aliens...

For the record, ITV transmitted "V" on Monday 30th July and Tuesday 31st July 1984. "VII" ran from Wednesday 1st August to Friday 3rd August 1984. Just thought you'd like to know where the break came!





Top left: An alien scout ship leaves an orbiting Mother Ship. Top right: The inside of the Mother Ship control room. Note the panorama of Los Angeles glimpsed through the viewport. Centre left: In a rebel raid on a National Guard armoury a Visitor is destroyed by fire. Centre: The Visitors' ship hovers about Los Angeles. Centre right: More death by fire: the rebels firebomb a parked scout ship. Bottom left: Hero Donovan (Marc Singer) has a close encounter with an unidentified Visitor aboard the alien command ship. Bottom right: During the same visit, Donovan witnesses extraterrestrial nesty Diana (Jane Badler) taking a lunch break.



"V" was the highest-rated show of the NBC-TV season and, although there was talk of peckaging it as a movie for overseas release in Europe, nothing happened. Meanwhile, NBC toyed with the idea of turning it into a weekly, hour-long series. However, that idea was scrapped due to the high production costs that such a programme would require. Last summer, NBC, Warner Bros and "V" creator Ken Johnson, came up with a concept for a second mini-series to fill in the blanks left by the first broadcast.

Johnson wrote a first set of scripts, but, according to Warner Bros sources, let go of the project when the burden of preparing it for its scheduled May release date became too much. Johnson was unavailable for comment. To fill in for Johnson, Warner Bros asked the team of Daniel H. Bliett, and Robert Singer to become the executive producers of "V II". Their previous credits include *Cujo*, *The Howling* and the recent *Sadat* mini-series. "V II" had a \$14 million budget and utilises over 90 speaking roles and more than 300 crew members and technicians.

A visit to Sound Stage 24 of The Burbank Studios confirmed the importance that has been placed on "V II". The entire stage was transformed into the interior of a Visitor mothership. In unused corners of the set, large groups of orange-garbed Visitors sit around, waiting for their shooting calls. Director Richard Heffron talks about his part in the series. "I got involved only about six weeks before we started. I'd seen the first "V" and liked it very much. I'd been struck by its contents, and thought it would be fun to do the sequel. I'd done one other science fiction picture called *Futureworld*, and I've always liked the genre. I loved the idea of doing this kind of metaphor for the Nazi occupation in WWII, changing it to people from outer space who were lizards, but who used the same techniques of divide and conquer. I thought it was very clever."

Merc Singer, who plays free-lance cameraman and rebel Donovan, strongly believes in the message behind the series. "It is a show that is based upon some values and some realities that we all should remember are important. One of the things that Ken Johnson, the original writer/director/producer, really wanted to stress was how a society could be subverted, and its standards changed from something good to something evil through coercion, propaganda, enticement and fear. . . We saw Americans, in a time of national crisis, doing things that we don't like to think we would do. Turning their backs on their neighbours, etc. . . Then, there are those who act in just the opposite way and set a good example by trying to set society on a normal course."

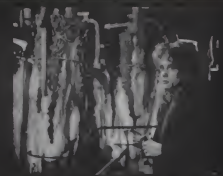
Obviously, Singer was pleased with the reception of the first "V". "I was very thrilled. On one hand, action-adventure is what I went to do most of all in my career. That makes me excited, makes me happy and keeps the adrenaline flowing. On the other hand,



everybody wants the work that they're involved in to have substance and dignity. I believe that we did achieve that in "V".

Frank Ashmore, who plays a "good" alien, Martin, and Jane Badler, who plays the part of beautiful Visitor Diana talk about their surprise and delight when "V" became a ratings hit, while relaxing next to the darkened, mothership corridors. Badler is sitting next to an eerie sculpture of herself, that later on will be used for a close up of Diana swallowing a whole rabbit. Both actors loved their characters, a departure from the types of roles they have usually played. "I loved playing Diana!" says Badler. "It's probably the most fun part I've ever played. I like the fact that my character is an alien. It's so nice to have the freedom to be able to show all those feelings that in real life you have to suppress because it's not acceptable—and get paid for it! Besides, who really knows what lizard people are like? So, I can set all the rules."

Ashmore too feels very strongly about his character. "During World War II, there were many Germans in the underground who assisted the French and the Americans in the resistance efforts," explains the actor. "Because, they knew what the ultimate outcome of Nazism would be, and they couldn't condone it. Martin is essentially, metaphorically speaking, that type of a man. He sees that this is—the word inhuman is probably not correct when you're talking about an alien!—but he can see that what they're doing is evil. Especially after he's had the emotional exchange he has with his friend Donovan. I was born in 1945. My father was in the airforce and paid a heavy price, being a young man involved in that whole scene, so I feel very strongly about the series and my character. I respect anybody who would stick their necks out the way the



Top: Donovan (Marc Singer) grapples with an alien whose cover he's blown. Small pictures, left to right: Daniel (David Packer), a human traitor, and Robin (Blair Telfin), the daughter of a rebel. The hero's son Sean is put on ice for future use by the aliens. Stogie of the aliens, a tv announcer called Kristine (Jenny Sullivan), discovers the aliens' awful secret. In a dream sequence Sean is killed by the aliens while escaping from their ship. Above: The aliens arrive looking like refugees from Hitler's Germany. Opposite page: The hardcore of the rebel movement. Front row, left to right, Marc Singer, Faye Grant, Michael Wright, back row, left to right: Blair Telfin, Mickey Jones and Michael Ironside.

resistance people of the Forties did."

With shooting having been started in October, for a six-hour programme that was to be broadcast the first week of May, time is the enemy to conquer. "Since most of the cast were people that had been in the first "V", it was possible to cast the picture very quickly," says Heffron. "That was the only part of filming "V" that was easy. I had no idea it was going to be quite as enormous as it has been. This is a very complicated, difficult and expensive piece. It's probably more complicated than the science fiction feature I did, and there's a good deal less time to do it in, because we have only a 65-day shooting schedule for six hours of television. Fortunately, I have some very good people to work with, people with whom I've worked before."

One of the people involved is Martin Rabinowitz, the Production Designer. An artist and sculptor who lives in New Mexico, Rabinowitz confines his motion picture work to one project a year. In the past he has worked on fantasy projects, such as the ill-fated television version of Logan's Run and Tobe Hooper's Salem's Lot. "I was called by the director at the very beginning of October. I had worked with him

before. I worked it out with the studio and came in within days and began working on the film. The first episode showed the scale of the mothership. When we measured it out on the matte shots, it came to three miles wide. But it had never been reflected in the interiors. Most of them, like Diana's chambers, were shown to be very tiny. Mr Heffron's idea was that we had a chance to correct that, and repropotion the audience's ideas as to the magnitude of the interiors. We also had the chance to see out of the spaceship, down to Los Angeles."

To enhance the image of the ship's immense size, Rabinowitz designed a new, elaborate Master Control Room and Communications centre, as well as a high-tech "conversion chamber" where uncooperative earthlings are made to see the error of their ways. "In designing the control room/communications centre," explains the production designer, "we used some of the modular and design facets that already existed. I couldn't go totally far afield from where they started. The rest of the design comes out of my own sculpting background. We started shooting within three weeks of the time I started on the show. They didn't know the progression of what was going to come first, second, third or fourth. We had no shooting schedule. We had to be preparing everything in the entire show at the same time."

Director Heffron admits that "V//I" has been under continuous time pressure. "We've been shaping the picture as we go," says Heffron. "Actually, it's three pictures. Sometimes I forget about that, six hours is a long time. We're using all the tricks that we have to get it done. For example, we're trying to do all the photography for the first two hour movie early, so that it can be almost finished by the time we're done shooting the rest. We had to change the way we



scheduled the movie, so that those shots that needed optical special effects were done first. It is fortunate that we've shot the picture more or less in order. As the story evolves, and we see the way the characters are relating to each other, we can continue to make changes that make sense. It's a way of really improving the movie.

"Another trick that we used," continues Heffron, "was to reduce the number of opticals, which really means to reduce the number of times that Visitors' ships fly through the air of Los Angeles. The opticals require so much advance time, that there really wasn't any way to do that in time for a May screening. Unfortunately, central to the plot that we started with, was the story of the rebels stealing Visitors' ships and flying about the world in them. But, basically, I feel that the central theme of "V//I" comes from the story of a group of amateurs who try to resist these very powerful people from another place. It's not so bad that they didn't get their hands on all these twenty-first century vehicles, that they're stuck with their own talents, hands and small weapons. I think it makes good drama."

Singer, who does many of his own stunts in the



film, talks about an experience with a decidedly un-twenty-first century type of transportation. "We did a horse riding sequence. The horses performed beautifully, and as usual, the stuntmen were professional perfection. Then, we had to do the close ups. That required riding on a different horse, behind the camera car. The car was travelling at about twenty-five miles per hour and I was galloping on a less comfortable animal that was very skittish. At one point, the director said, 'Ride on past the car'. So, I dug into the horse a little bit, it picked up its gait, and we rode up alongside of the car. We were on this very narrow road, with hardly any room to get past. Yet, we passed the front end of the car and, as we did, the horse suddenly got frightened of something, and began to fall beneath the front of the truck..."

"I managed to control the horse and pull him back out of it, but in doing so, I lost both stirrups. Meanwhile, the driver of the truck hadn't noticed all this, because he was watching for the crew in the back of the truck. The horse then threw me to the side, and I almost fell under the truck. But, fortunately I managed to stay on." The actor adds philosophi-

cally, "Another day, another dollar. The bottom line is, if I weren't doing that, I'd be bored!"

When asked about what she liked the most in the sequel, Badler pauses before answering. "I think what happens to Robin, the girl who has been impregnated by a lizard, and the child she ultimately creates, is absolutely fascinating. I think people will really love that. There's a lot of special effects with it, and then it takes on a whole new story with the child. The ending is really neat. It doesn't just end, it also addresses the real problems of our world - that people are all fighting each other. Because of the situation of the Visitors, they've had to join hands and fight an alien force. The end makes you aware that if we could all band together, life would be much better."

Ashmore agrees, "It is not only an allegory, but it is also timely," he says. "I don't think that Ken Johnson, or Dan Blatt, realised at the time that they took this on, that the programme is going to air in 1984. It has a tremendous Orwellian overtone. This three-mile wide space craft hovering over a major city like Los Angeles - essentially it is Big Brother."

V

**"Plumbing the depths".
A Starburst TV Review
by Bob Shaw**

I have a friend who thought *The Battle of Britain* was a rotten movie because one scene showed a 1942 Spitfire with a type of gunsight which didn't become available until 1944.

"You're silly for fretting over details like that," I told him airily, not concealing my amusement. "It's the sweep of the action that counts."

I also have a friend who deserted a perfectly good booze-up well before closing time because he didn't want to miss that night's episode of *V*, the sci-fi mini-series which invaded our TV screens at the end of July.

When I mentioned the impossibility of paying any serious heed to a story in which reptiles can cross-fertilise humans, he smiled and said, "It doesn't matter about details like that—I want to find out what's going to happen."

Same thing? The other side of the coin? Sauce for the gander?

Well, I maintain that it isn't, and the difference is all to do with respect. Respect for one's craft; respect for one's audience.

A director making a film about the sinking of the *Graf Spee* simply can't lay his hands on the original vessel, therefore it is acceptable that he will do a little fudging with the aid of some ex-W.D. hardware. But the director of a science fiction or fantasy movie has no such constrictions, and therefore no excuses. He starts off with a clean slate, and it's entirely up to him what he puts on it.

He has unlimited opportunity to soar the heights. On the other hand, he has equal freedom to plumb the depths.

Which brings us neatly back to *V*.

The opening minutes were a strange blend of your standard Nam-is-hell movie and *Star Trek*—a sort of *Spock-alypse Now*, if you like. There was quite a bit of competent footage of a clean-cut American war correspondent nearly getting himself killed by helicopter gunships which were raiding a Third World village. My aviation expert friend would probably have begun to fidget during the scene in which a Guevara look-alike shot down one of the attacking gunships with a pistol, but I was able to tolerate that. As I said above—it's the sweep of the action that counts.

And then, just as the reporter was about to be whittled down to his ankles by a multi-barrelled cannon at a range of ten paces, the battle was aborted thanks to the arrival of a giant alien spaceship. The ship was of the frisbee pattern which is *de rigeur* for alien craft, and we quickly learned that that fifty of them had appeared in our skies and that the other forty-nine were

hovering above Earth's capital cities. (It was never made clear why the odd one out had chosen to hover over *Chez Guevara*, but as it saved a lead character's life perhaps it would have been ungracious to pursue the point.)

The saucer which was parked over Washington, D.C., soon disgorged the alien leader, a character who looked and acted like Walter Mondale except that he refrained from saying, "Where's the meat?" This was very prudent of him under the circumstances, because it might have given the aliens' game away.

They were, you see, here to eat us.

They also planned, while they were at it, to steal all the Earth's water—conditions on their home planet apparently having gone far beyond the ban-on-sprinklers phase.

For reasons best known to themselves, the visitors didn't exploit their superior might by simply pitching in and eating us and draining our seas. Instead, they cooked up a story about interstellar co-operation and did a great deal of friendly mingling with the human population.

This was particularly devious of them because the aliens had another big secret up their sleeves. Up their trouser legs as well, one might add, because it transpired that they were actually green reptiles done up in a sort of jiffy wrap of pink plastic which made them look human.

Those pink coverings must have been masterpieces of cosmetic science because any saurian who slipped one on immediately had his eyes shifted from the side of his head to the frontal location preferred by humans; his foot-long forked tongue trimmed to more manageable proportions; and his hundred-or-so spiky teeth decently concealed behind NHS dentures. (There was no reference to the long tails which are sported by most self-respecting reptiles, but we've all heard of docking in space.)

The only fault I could find with the plastic sheaths was that they could easily be, and quite frequently were, ripped away from the face like bubble gum, but it is traditional in screen sf for alien technology to be somewhat uneven.

This most often shows up in portable weapons, and those in *V* were no exception. All the visitors' sidearms emitted *slow-moving* blobs of radiation, a direct hit from which could result in anything—depending on the exigencies of the plot—from instantaneous death to an effect like a box of Swan Vests igniting in one's pocket.

One nod towards plausibility was that the aliens spoke through artificial voice boxes. This was demonstrated by the fact that their voices had a wasp-in-a-jamjar quality—that old uneven technology again—like a radio whose front is about to drop off. Unfortunately *V*'s sound technicians sometimes forgot to do their stuff and the aliens, particularly those who were





shown to have good qualities, occasionally spoke normally.

Yes, some of the ordinary worker-type aliens did have a sympathetic side to their nature and became friendly with humans. Very friendly, as it turned out. That was in sharp contrast to their commanders, who were unmitigated nasties with a disconcerting habit of cramming small furry animals down their gullets, alive and whole, during lulls in the conversation. The message was that ordinary people/lizards everywhere have an innate goodness and it is the power-seekers of this universe who bring about all our woes.

Now and then during this preposterous series there were similar attempts to comment on human nature and the Eternal Truths, but the screenplay writers were, perhaps, too modest to use their own voices and contented themselves with borrowing bits from other films. Spot-the-movie became quite an engrossing game for film buffs in V's audience. The work of contemporary Hollywood directors was mined most, but the discerning eye could pick out a leaning of Bunuel here and there.

The plot of V was one which had become well established in pulp sci-

ence fiction by the 1930s - some humans saw through the aliens' sham and organised a resistance movement, ultimately triumphing in spite of their lack of numbers through being clever, brave, resourceful and elusive. But where V differed from the typical *Thrilling Wonder Stories* offering of my boyhood was in the fraternisation which took place between some reptiles and some humans.

That would never have been allowed in the old days!

It was always a well-known characteristic of bug-eyed monsters that they had an unnatural appetite for our women-folk, and - although such things couldn't even be hinted at in a more prudish era - our fevered imaginations led us to suspect that as well as being peckish they wanted to get their leg, tentacle or pseudopod over. Things never got as far as that, of course. Captain Comet always intervened in time.

And here in 1984 we have the whole thing on television. The notion of romantic encounters between reptiles and humans has a repulsive fascination, and may have a lot to do with the success we are told V had in the States.



Opposite top: A makeup test shot of a Visitor whose cover has been blown. In the actual show, the makeup did look better! Opposite below: Mika Donovan (Marc Singer) and Tony (Evan Kim), laden down with the tools of their trade, run for their lives during the opening sequence of the first episode. Top left: Diana (Jane Badler) and Pamela (Sarah Douglas) are angry to discover that a fallen rebel is actually one of their own people. Centre left: A Visiting scout ship zooms across the LA skyline. Bottom left: Rebel Taylor (Jason Bernard) is saved from almost certain death by Nice Visitor Willie (Robert Englund). Above Tony and Donovan are startled to witness a huge space craft hovering above them in the opening moments of V.

► It also raises some intriguing questions.

Should an alien lizard who gets the hots – if cold-blooded creatures can do such a thing – for a woman be regarded as a pervert? Or is he simply showing that his heart, not to mention other bits of his anatomy, is in the right place? And did the producers of *V* consider the sub-title "Love is not having to say you're saurian"?

No doubt many people will consider the whole subject improper and unpalatable, but the director of *V* was evidently a man who saw no point in half-heartedly dipping into bad taste when it was possible to have a damned good wallow in it. In a crescendo of crassness which may be unequalled on the screen, he took the famous scene

from *Alien*, changed John Hurt into a reptile-impregnated woman, and treated us to the spectacle of a mini-lizard popping up – hissing and snarling – out of her Caesarian section.

I'm told that *V* is to be followed by a 26-part sequel. If that is the case I may have to stop describing myself as a science fiction writer and claim a trade which is more socially acceptable. Traffic warden, perhaps. Or slum landlord.

In the meantime, to prove that I am one of the privileged who saw the first series, I am assiduously practising my V-sign.

Bob Shaw is a respected science fiction novelist whose best-known books include Other Days, Other Eyes (1972), A Wreath of Stars (1976) and Verigo (1978).



V

"Genuine moments of invention."

A Starburst TV Review by Richard Holliss

America loves tv mini-series, or so it seems. Generally I dislike them so found myself tuning into the first episode of *V* with some trepidation. But over the following days I became so hooked on the show that I didn't dare risk missing a single episode. *V* had genuine moments of invention. Its characters came across as real flesh and blood, not comic strip stereotypes prevalent in so many sf series. I liked it as much as I had enjoyed the first series of BBC's *Survivors* by Terry Nation. Nation's strong feeling for the "indomitable human spirit" was easily shared by *V*'s writer and producer Kenneth Johnson.

The series' use of sub-plots, showcased the political as well as physical war between man and the visitors. On one hand we had the tv reporter Mike Donovan (Marc Singer) and his group of resistance fighters, led by Juliet Parrish (Faye Grant). In opposition we found the evil Diana (Jane Badler), Steven (Andrew Prine) and Earth recruit Danny (David Packer). Though the 1984 updating of the holocaust story bordered on the heavy handed side, the fate the aliens plan for the inhabitants of Earth (the aliens herded the peoples of Earth into giant processing plants, turning them into food) was genuinely chilling.

Excellent too was the clever parody of the power of propaganda. A lot of Earth people believed that the visitors came in peace and meant no harm. Donovan's mother was one such person, and some, like Daniel Bernstein, even betrayed their own families. But we had seen the grotesque side of the aliens and we also knew the fate of these blind individuals would be sealed.

As Los Angeles became the microcosm of the World's problems, the heroes of the West Coast became leaders in the decisive battle against the invaders. One character that made the series even more enjoyable was the cold calculating Diana, a woman whose interest in torture made her a terrifying adversary. Her two scenes with Pamela (Sarah Douglas), another of the coldly attractive aliens, was a sheer delight in bitchiness, better than any of the lip gloss queens of *Dallas* or *Dynasty*.

Some of the special effects were quite startling, the shuttle craft scenes expertly handled. The producers included occasional establishing shots of alien shuttles flying across the rooftops of ordinary suburban streets with no apparent motive at that point in the story. This showed the extent to which the aliens had integrated with Earth society. Later in the story less sequences of the spaceships were used with the exception of the excellent matte painting of one hovering above the pumping station. When rebels destroy the base it's the Universal film *Earthquake* (1974) that provides the necessary stock footage to show the scenes of destruction.

V had its faults, of course. Technical glitches like the continual appearance of the camera boom and the top of the camera hood jutting into the picture every now and again were irritating. Plotwise, it was the illogical refining of the chemical that finally kills the visitors. There was just too much of it at the rebels' disposal. But even silly sequences such as the birth of the alien baby were still handled with some daring, and again our sympathy was extended towards the obviously fake looking gremlin, which looked more dead when it was supposed to be alive, than the lizards in the scientists' glass cases.

But for all this, *V* was great entertainment and very exciting viewing. What we don't want is a long running series. It's too good an idea to throw away on a tedious *Mission Impossible* vs *The Invaders* format.



Top right: Marc Singer as Mike Donovan and Faye Grant as Juliet Parrish, the heads of the rebel alliance. Above: Jane Badler as the evil and perverted alien, Diana.

READERSHIP SURVEY

We at Starburst are making a determined effort to produce the kind of magazine you want to read. To help us appreciate exactly what it is you want to feast your eyes upon in these pages, we have devised our very first Readership Survey. Here is your chance to tell us what you like/dislike about Starburst. What you'd like to see more/less of in the magazine, and other questions to help us do an even better job.

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BEFORE GREYSTOKE

OR: THE OLDEST SWINGER IN TOWN

A Starburst Feature by John Brosnan

One of the many odd things about *Greystoke* is that it's the first Tarzan movie since 1968, unless you count the 1961 *Tarzan the Ape Man* which was little more than a showcase for Bo Derek's rumoured talents and her more obvious physical attributes (poor old Miles O'Keefe, who played Tarzan, had little opportunity to get between her and her husband's camera during the making of the film) and the two 1970 Ron Ely made-for-TV productions, *Tarzan's Deadly Silence* and *Tarzan's Jungle Rebellion* which were released theatrically in some countries.



When you consider that between 1918 and 1968 there was a Tarzan movie almost every year then this 16 year gap in ape man exploits seems a bit of a mystery.

From the very beginning, Tarzan's creator, Edgar Rice Burroughs, was aware that Tarzan had a lot of screen potential. He always insisted on retaining all rights to his characters when he sold his stories to the magazines. This was a shrewd move on his part, especially since he was totally new to the devious world of publishing when he sold his first story in

1911. Even as early as 1913, after the first appearance of Tarzan in *All-Story Magazine*, he attempted to interest film producers in the character but they all turned him down.

However in 1915 he did sell a story to a company called Selig Pictures. Titled *The Lad and the Lion* it wasn't a Tarzan story – and Burroughs was glad of that fact when he saw the finished production in 1917. He thought it was a very poor film and he was also upset that the makers had deviated so much from his original material. In 1916 he'd signed a

contract with an insurance agent called Bill Parsons to form a film company to produce a screen version of *Tarzan of the Apes* and he became determined that this film would remain faithful to his story.

Trying to ensure this Burroughs made frequent visits to the location during the filming, most of which was done in Louisiana (though there was some background footage shot in Brazil). Despite his efforts the film of *Tarzan of the Apes* still differed in many ways from his original, though from all accounts it was more faithful than later versions.

Left: A scene from the never-released Terzan's Greatest Tennis Match (no, I tell a lie, it was taken on location during the shooting of Terzan the Magnificent [1960]). Below Left: Terzan (Christopher Lambert) surrounded by his "family" in Greystoke. Below: Terzan dresses as the "Apeman about Town" when he takes his title of Earl of Greystoke, seen here with Jane (Andie MacDowell). Bottom: Terzan the wild teenager in Greystoke. Right: The extremely rare American one-sheet poster (printed by the old stone litho process) for Terzan of the Apes [1916], the first adaptation of Burrough's novel.



And completely faithful or not it was a big hit with audiences. Released in January 1918 it was one of the first movies to gross over a million dollars.

Tarzan was played by Elmo Lincoln (real name Otto Elmo Linkenhelter). He wasn't a professional actor (nor were most of his successors in the role) but he'd already appeared in a number of films due to his striking physique. He was about 6 feet tall, weighed 200 pounds, and possessed a barrel chest of truly impressive proportions. He was required to wear a wig in the film to conceal a rapidly receding hairline but looked suitably powerful. And he needed all that strength because the making of the movie was a particularly strenuous experience for him. In one scene he actually had to stab a lion to death for real! (Sorry, animal lovers.) An old and declawed lion to be sure, but a live one nonetheless.

The success of *Tarzan* led to a sequel being hastily put into production, again starring Lincoln, and was released later that same year. Called *Romance of Tarzan* it had Tarz' turning up in California in modern dress and was very inferior, apparently, to its predecessor. Even so it was just as financially successful, in spite of being slated unmercifully by the critics.

At this point, not surprisingly, Burroughs and Parsons had a disagreement. This led to Burroughs selling the film rights of *The Return of Tarzan* to another company – the Great Western Producing Company (presumably they produced great westerns). For this film a 28 year old ex-fireman named Joseph C. Pohler was cast as the ape man (they changed his name to Gene Pollard) and it was shot in New York, Florida and Balboa, California. Released in 1920 under the title *The Revenge of Tarzan* it was also very successful. ▶



► The same year the director of *Revenge*, Harry Revier, made a serial called *Son of Tarzan* based on a Burroughs-approved script. It starred a young Hawaiian actor Kamuel C. Searle as Korak, Tarzan's son, and athlete P. Dempsey Tabler as Tarzan. The latter was surely one of the most ludicrous-looking Tarzans of all with a slight physique, pot-belly and frizzy fright wig, but Searle fitted Korak's image perfectly. Tragically, though, Searle was fatally injured during the filming when a supposedly tame elephant smashed him into the ground with its trunk. A double was used for his final scenes but despite everything the serial was yet another triumph for Tarzan at the box office.

Elmo Lincoln returned to the Tarzan role in a 1921 serial called *The Adventures of Tarzan*, (directed by Robert F. Mills), a comeback not welcomed by Mr Burroughs who had never been particularly happy with Lincoln's portrayal of his valuable creation. Burroughs thought he'd discovered the perfect Tarzan himself when, a couple of years later, he spotted a six foot four inch tall man called Jim Pierce at a party at his ranch. So Pierce, another former athlete, found himself making *Tarzan and the Golden Lion* (directed by J.P. McGowan in 1926). But Pierce didn't enjoy the experience much, especially all the running about on hard ground in his bare feet which led him to insist on doing some scenes wearing tennis shoes! He never played Tarzan on the screen again but did play the role in the long-running Tarzan radio serial. He also married Burroughs' daughter Joan, who played Jane to his radio Tarzan. Mr Pierce was obviously smarter than your average apeman...

The next Tarzan was less fortunate. He was Frank Merrill, a gymnast and former stuntman, who starred in the serial *Tarzan the Mighty* (directed by Jack Nelson and Ray Taylor in 1928). The production was notable for being the first to use the famous vine-

swinging technique (actually a rope disguised as a vine) and the sequel, *Tarzan the Tiger* (1929) – hurriedly equipped with crude sound effects – was the first to use the Tarzan yell. But it was sound that ended Merrill's vine-swinging career; though he made an impressive Tarzan with his muscular body and noble features, despite the off-the-shoulder leopard-skin frock, with matching head-band, that he was obliged to wear, it was felt his voice was unsuitable for talkies (many others had their acting careers ended at this time for the same reason but it's now thought that the poor quality of the primitive sound-recording equipment was more often to blame than the actors' voices).

Ironically the first of the "talkie" Tarzans ended up speaking hardly at all, much to Burroughs' considerable annoyance. This was Johnny Weissmuller who starred in MGM's big budget 1932 production *Tarzan the Ape Man*. It was after the success of a jungle film of their own, *Trader Horn*, in 1931 that MGM decided to film the original Tarzan story (interestingly, some of the footage shot in Africa by the *Trader Horn* second unit is used as rear-projection background in a few scenes in *Tarzan*... and it looks awful).

It was a tremendous box-office success but Burroughs was very upset that MGM had changed Tarzan from an "articulate, intelligent and educated British lord to a white jungle savage capable of only a few words of speech and a lot of grunts" (just as Burroughs knew little about Africa and real apes when he wrote *Tarzan* it seems he didn't know much about British lords either, some of whom are only capable of a few words of speech and a lot of grunts).

But for the majority of cinema-goers Johnny Weissmuller became the Tarzan and even today a lot of people still consider him the best of the bunch. Personally I always thought he looked a bit too thick

for the role; his face best-suited for dumb gangster parts rather than the Lord of the Jungle, but one has to admit he had, in his younger days, a superb physique. He was, in short, a real *hunk* and sex was really what MGM's *Tarzan* was all about. For one thing they got rid of the leopard skin frocks and bear rugs that the previous Tarzans had been lumbered with and dressed Weissmuller, a former Olympic swimming champion, in the briefest of loin cloths. They also paired him with Maureen O'Sullivan as Jane, the upper-class young lady who accompanies her father into Darkest Africa. Then just 21 years old, the Irish-born actress was exceptionally good-looking and there's a genuine sexual tension in her scenes with the practically naked Weissmuller after he's captured her. These scenes are pure tease between the helpless but sophisticated young girl and the powerful, but innocent, primitive man, mainly because of their underlying sense of danger (will he or won't he? Will she be able to stop if he does? Will she want to stop him... and so on). For this reason it was a canny move on MGM's part to have Weissmuller play Tarzan as a pure primitive rather than as Burroughs' English lord. If Tarzan had come down his vine saying, "I say, Jane old girl, fancy a game of jungle tennis?" the sexual tension would have been dissipated. And how.

But there was more to *Tarzan the Ape Man* than sex; MGM lavished a great deal of money and attention on the production including their top director William S. Van Dyke, and the result was the most technically impressive Tarzan movie made up until that time. The studio also improved upon two of Tarzan's best-known attributes: his vine-swinging technique which they made more spectacular by having Weissmuller doubled by a trapeze artist who hurtled from one vine-camouflaged trapeze to another at great speed – and his blood-curdling yell which the MGM sound department

beefed up by overlaying Weissmuller's voice with such things as the bleat of a camel and the howl of a hyena.

MGM made a big-budget, rip-roaring sequel in 1934, *Tarzan and His Mate*, but for all the spectacular action sequences, including an incredible climactic battle sequence between hordes of natives and even bigger hordes of animals, the film's emphasis was again on sex, though the eroticism was of a different kind than in the first picture. Jane was no longer in any danger from the ape man; on the contrary, their relationship had obviously progressed a long way from the exchange-of-first-names stage. This is made clear by the audiences' first glimpse of Jane; gone are the jodhpurs, shirt and boots she was wearing in the other movie, she is now dressed, barely, in a small leather halter and a kind of leather apron that consists of two loose-hanging flaps, front and back. Not without reason has this costume gone down in movie history – it constitutes a marvellously clever piece of teasing and throughout the movie the get-up always seems on the verge of revealing more of Jane than is intended. It never does but one wonders how many retakes were needed to ensure this.

Even when Jane isn't wearing the costume, such as in the erotic nude swimming sequence with Weissmuller, the film makers managed to avoid showing any of the naughty bits but, alas, the movie's blatant sexuality was too much for the Hays Office – the Hollywood film censorship body that was radically tightening up its censorship rules around the time of the picture's release. They insisted that Jane cover-up for the next Tarzan movie, and that the sexual element be down-played to the point of extinction. Thus in the 1936 *Tarzan Escapes* Ms O'Sullivan appears in an unexciting,



Left: Frank Merrill and Natalie Kingston as Tarz and Jane in the 1926 serial *Tarzan*. Above: Joanna Barnes and Denny Miller in the 1959 version of *Tarzan the Ape Man*. The budget was so small they couldn't afford a jungle – just one vine. Below: A scene from the aptly-named *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure* in 1959 which is widely regarded as being one of the best Tarzan movies. Gordon Scott is trying to shove Anthony Quayle off a cliff (if you look closely you can see the safety wires attached to both of them). Director John Guillermin, with cigarette, is crouching in the centre of the platform.



one-piece costume that covers so much of her it must have been made out of an entire elephant skin, or maybe two. It also seems that in the subsequent Tarzan movies she starred in the damn dress got longer every time...

Meanwhile back in another studio jungle an independent producer called Sol Lesser had, in 1933, acquired the rights to a Tarzan story and made the low-budget *Tarzan the Fearless* starring Clarence Linden Crabbe. Buster Crabbe, as he was known, was an old friend of Weissmuller's and, like him, a former swimming champion. But Lesser's film, directed by Robert Hill, was released as both a feature and a serial, a clumsy format that worked against its success.

Another independent Tarzan movie was *The New Adventures of Tarzan* in 1935, directed by Edward Kull. Burroughs himself was involved with the production company and Tarzan was played by Herman Brix, yet another former Olympic athlete, who was Burroughs' personal choice for the role but the movie fared even worse than the Lesser production. A disappointed Burroughs decided to pull out of film making and sold the film rights to the rest of the Tarzan stories to MGM, with the exception of one property that Lesser had managed to buy. In 1938 the latter made *Tarzan's Revenge* with Glen Morris as Tarz. Morris was yet another former Olympic champion but pretty wooden as an actor and the film was a financial flop.

But Lesser didn't give up. In 1942 MGM decided, after having made six Tarzan movies with Weissmuller and O'Sullivan, that the series was fading in popularity (I blame Jane's ever-lengthening dress myself) and put it up for sale, including poor Weissmuller as well, so Lesser moved in and bought up both the film rights to Tarzan and Weissmuller's contract. He took the whole package over to RKO studios and began churning out a new series of Tarzan films that were, on the whole, cheaper and inferior to the MGM versions. The first of the RKO Tarzans was *Tarzan Triumphs*, directed by William Thiele in 1943.

Weissmuller made six Tarzan films for Lesser before, at the age of 44, exchanging his loin-cloth (by then also much larger than it had been in 1932) for the safari suit of Jungle Jim, a character he played in a successful series of cheap second features and a later TV series.

Lesser replaced Weissmuller with Lex Barker, a – you guessed it – former athlete. But Barker was also, unusually for a new Tarzan, a professional actor. Not a good actor, mind, but definitely a professional one. He appeared in five Tarzans, his first being *Tarzan's Magic Fountain* in 1949 (directed by Lee Sholem), and his last one was *Tarzan and the She-Devil* in 1953 (Kurt Neumann).

After a two year hiatus Lesser continued the series with *Tarzan's Hidden Jungle* (directed by Harold Schuster) and a new Tarzan, Gordon Scott. Scott, whose real name was Gordon Werschkull, was a 28 year old Las Vegas life guard when he was discovered by two Hollywood agents who brought him to Lesser's attention.

Gordon Scott is my favourite screen Tarzan, probably because he was the first actor I saw in the role and therefore automatically associate him with the character. But being as objective as possible I do feel also that he was superior to Weissmuller, Barker and the others. Admittedly he wasn't great shakes as an actor, but he did possess a certain screen presence – a kind of quiet dignity – that perfectly suited the Lord of the Jungle. Without having to try too hard he seemed automatically superior to the white trash – the evil hunters, the corrupt businessmen, the decadent women – who were always invading, and getting lost in, his patch of the jungle.

► Also his acting improved as he went along and by the last two Tarzan films he made he was actually quite good. Those two particular films were also quite good...

The reason why was that Sol Lesser, disheartened by the ever decreasing box office returns on the Tarzan movies, had been persuaded to sell the rights to a young, ex-television producer called Sy Weintraub in 1958. Weintraub retained Scott as Tarzan but his first production, *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure* in 1959, was in other ways very different from the Lesser Tarzans. For one thing it was a much tougher, hard-hitting movie with a good script and slick, pacey direction by British John Guillermin. It also featured a good supporting cast, including Sean Connery and Anthony Quayle among the ruthless gang of killers that Tarzan hunts down one by one. But most importantly Weintraub changed Tarzan himself, turning him into a more modern, up-to-date character who was capable of articulate

speech. Tarzan had become, in a sense, more like Burrough's original creation (but the author, having died in 1950, was no longer around to appreciate the change).

Weintraub's fresh treatment proved to be what the series needed and the film was a big success with audiences. In direct contrast was an MGM remake that same year of *Tarzan the Ape Man* (incidentally MGM had taken over the Tarzan series again back in 1957, the last of the Lesser Tarzans and the Weintraub ones were all MGM productions) starring Denny Miller. Miller was a former basketball player (which made a change of sorts) and one-time regular on the *Wagon Train* TV series, and made a pretty wet Tarzan. The movie, so cheaply made it contained sequences from the 1932 black and white original tinted in a vain attempt to fit them in with the new colour footage, took Tarzan back to square one, grunts and all. It must rank as one of the worst Tarzan movies of all...



Due to a built-in genetic handicap, women are unable to walk in jungles and must be carried everywhere. Gordon Scott as Tarzan and Eva Brent as a wishy-washy, over-dressed Jane in *Tarzan's Fight for Life* (1958).

Weintraub made one more film with Gordon Scott, *Tarzan the Magnificent* in 1960 (directed by Robert Day) which was alright but not as impressive as *Greatest Adventure* despite the similar plot, and then decided he wanted a sleeker, less muscle-bound Tarzan. He replaced Scott with former stunt man Jack Mahoney who had played one of the villains in the final Scott picture. Mahoney, real name Jacques O'Mahoney (it's true!), seems an odd choice considering he was then 43 years old, almost the same age that Weissmuller was when he retired from the role of Tarzan. And though he'd been acting for quite awhile, and was best known for his Range Rider TV role in the early 1950s, he was far from being hot stuff as an actor.

While Scott went off to Italy where he made a series of costume epics in the 1960s, such as *Maciste Against the Vampires* and *Goliath and the Black Hercules*, Mahoney made *Tarzan Goes to India* in 1962 which, though directed by John Guillermin, was a disappointment after the last two Scott Tarzans. Mahoney only lasted for one more movie—while on location in Thailand for *Tarzan's Three Challenges* in 1963 he contracted amoebic dysentery and pneumonia. He insisted on completing the picture (and if you see the picture his drastic weight loss is alarmingly apparent) and as a result it took him a year and a half to recuperate.

Mahoney's replacement in the loin cloth (hopefully a new one after all that dysentery) was Mike Henry, a former professional footballer with a muscular, if knotty, physique and all the acting ability of a tree. He lasted three films—his first was *Tarzan and the Valley of Gold* in 1966—before suing Weintraub over the injuries he'd sustained while on location for *Tarzan the Jungle Boy* (1968). He'd been stricken with a liver infection as well as the dreaded dysentery, and had also been badly bitten on the chin by a chimpanzee (chimps, Tarzan's habitual film companions, have been notoriously difficult to work with over the years, inflicting bites and worse on many of the Tarzan actors and actresses).

Henry was supposed to have starred in Weintraub's long-planned Tarzan TV series but his legal tussles with the producer ended that idea (Henry has been most recently seen on the screen playing Jackie Gleason's thick deputy in the *Smokey and the Bandit* movies). He was replaced by Ron Ely, real name Ronald Pierce (why would anyone change their name to Ely?) a six foot four former—yes, you guessed right again—athlete. He was a better actor than Henry but looked as if he belonged in a surfing movie rather than a jungle one. He was basically just too bland and nice to be an effective Tarzan—there was no sense of potential wildness about him.

But he certainly proved to be more tolerant of the dangerous working conditions than his immediate predecessor—during the filming of the first TV series in 1969 in Brazil he was bitten on the forehead by a lion, and he broke both his shoulders when he failed to make contact with a vine on two separate occasions. In a later series he fell and broke his arm, and for the first time in history Tarzan appeared with his arm in a sling.

As I said at the beginning of this piece the TV series brought a halt to the long-running series of Tarzan movies, until the coming of *Greystoke*, that is. But I, like other old Tarzan fans, have to confess I don't consider *Greystoke* to be a real Tarzan picture. In fact, I don't even consider it to be a good movie but that's another story.

Hopefully the success of *Greystoke*—and for some reason a lot of people are paying to see it—will lead other film makers to take an interest in the character and perhaps a new and less pretentiously arty Tarzan movie will result.

I wonder if Gordon Scott is busy these days? ■

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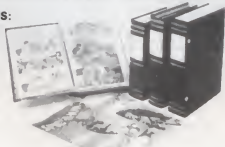
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Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

► The book should be worth a few quid now. The rest of the copies are probably being pulped at this very moment in a literal 1984 manner because the booklet praised – among other directors – the man who made the rivetting 1972 sf film, *Solaris*. And Andrei Tarkovsky has become a non-person by now. He's renounced Soviet citizenship and is staying this side of the Curtain – where he's been, mostly in Italy, since being allowed out to make his first non-Russian film, *Nostalgie* (1983). He's just decided not to go back.

I doubt if Italy can hold him and Dino Daren't touch him, not if Dino really wants to make *King Kong In Moscow*. Tarkovsky may well be in Hollywood by the time you read this. And if he's any more sf ideas like *Solaris*, that's a good home for him. I hope he's knocking on George Lucas' door... or vice-versa.

Incidentally, I hope to be looking at what's happened to Russian sf, since Tarkovsky moved out, in a later cosmonaut issue.

DARKSIDE TIME

George Romero's *tele-Tales From The Darkside* series has been rolling... oh so quietly. That's the good news, particularly if Channel Four has picked it up. The not-so-hot news is that actors in recent episodes have included Stuart Whitman (yawn!), Lou Jacobi, Keenan Wynn (double-yawn) and, rather better, Danny Aiello. As with the Russkies, I'm hoping to have more details and pictures on George's *Darkside* in a month or two.

GARY 'N' GEORGE

After the toils of making both *Oz* and his *Little Nemo* animation production, Gary Kurtz appears to be settling for a quieter life. He's won an executive position with United Artists Communications Inc. which is not MGM/UA, but the combine behind United Film Distribution in America, the backers of George Romero movies, including the end of that trilogy, *Day of the Dead*. Gary's not straying too far from our pages then. (Just joining up with another George.)

He had actually stepped down as line producer of his *Oz* film. *Police Academy*'s Paul Maslansky took over that wearying job. Trouble was poor Gary had to keep flitting back and forth between Elstree and Tokyo to check up

on *Little Nemo*. He was about the only person on *Oz* not flying by *Superman*'s Zoptic process.

LEGEND-ARY FIRE

We all know how clever the filmworld is at shuffling figures around. But try and work this one out... Everyone agrees that the terrible fire which razed The 007 Stage at Pinewood studios – and Ridley Scott's main *Legend* set standing on it at the time – caused damage amounting to \$700,000. Yet, it's costing twice that – and then some at \$1.5 million – to rebuild the giant, 40,000 sq ft stage. So, that's rather more than a \$700,000 fire, right? 'Tis in

my account book anyway.

The stage was built at the 48-year-old studio in 1976 to house Stromberg's submarines in *The Spy Who Loved Me*. Reputed to be the largest soundstage in Europe, it has since attracted such movies as *Superman*, *Dragonslayer* and *Krull*. Bond chief Cubby Broccoli and MGM/UA are helping Pinewood to build the new stage – with the insurance lolly.

ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR S/I!

Peter Cushing has donned the cape and the deer-stalker again. He's playing Sherlock Holmes for the first time in

17 years. And back on tv again. When Peter portrayed the great detective for 26 BBC tv plays in 1967, Nigel Stock was his Dr Watson. In the upcoming tele-flick, *The Masks of Death*, Sir John Mills is his second banana. Cushing first played Holmes in Terry Fisher's Hammer version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in 1959 when Andre Morell was the good, if bumbling doc.

The butling professional, Gordon Jackson, is also in the new treatment, plus Ray Milland and Anne Baxter to help keep American viewers awake. For most of them the Queen's English comes across as a foreign lingo. Minus sub-titles, they tend to drop off to sleep.



Above: The impressive cityscape from Fritz Lang's 1926 science fiction masterpiece, *Metropolis*. The film is due for a re-release any minute now. Not the original version, mind you, but a re-edited to a tight 87 minutes, with a new score masterminded by disco king Giorgio Moroder. As an added bonus the original black and white footage has been electronically tinted. Alan Jones' review will follow soon.

WICKED WINNER

Box-office flop or not (and when does that matter?), Jack Clayton's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* won the Edgar Allen Poe awards as best picture, script (Ray Bradbury) and music (James Horner) from America's National Horror Motion Picture Association in, of all places, Ogden, in Utah. David Cronenberg was named top director for *Dead Zone* (they made in Ogden, or what?), though *Videodrome* (now they're taking!) won the SPFX prize for Rick Baker. The (very) Dead star, Christopher Walken, and *Cujo's* darling Dee Wallace, got the acting awards, with an extra supporting nod for *The Hunger's* Susan Sarandon. No best supporting actor, though – not one in 1983? Well, that's Ogden, for you.

KING OF THE ...

Nick Castle is finally out of his pal John Carpenter's shadow. Nick's *Last Starfighter* is winning such good audiences – and critical plaudits – there's already talk of more adventures of Lance Guest – one of Nick's *Halloween II* stars. Lance is terrific and his bird, Catherine Mary Stewart, ain't bad. But it's Lance's movie with some right royal scene stealing from Robert Preston and Dan O'Herlihy.

SIGN OF THE TIMES

Big Sandy Howard, producer of the *Man Called Horse* opera, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *Death Ship*, *City on Fire* and the similarly ill-fated biggie, *Meteor*, is no longer a solo act. After 25 years, he's seen the light and finally gone into a full working partnership for the first time with two other guys, Mel Pearl and Don Levin. They've plucked a name from Hollywood's past and formed Republic Entertainment International and headquartered at E.T.'s home, the Laird Studios on LA's West Washington Boulevard.

"The world is changing quickly," explains Sandy. "The era of the small independent who produces a few films a year is over. The need for leverage with a multiple picture schedule is what the industry now demands." Sandy's had a lean couple of years since his heyday, until his quickie *Angel* thriller (not the Irish one) hit big bucks. Which means a sequel: *Avenging Angel*. I notice he's also still planning his underwater dream fantasy, *Odysea*, which he first told me about as far back as 1978. "It's *Gone With The Wind* under the water in 2080," he claimed then. At least the setting is different from the usual after-the-big-bang movies. Survivors move into oceanic cities and rally around a Greek-style goddess leader for their ultimate battle with the warlords of the dying earth. Sandy always hoped John Boorman would make it. I rather hope somebody does ...

LIGHTS ...!

Australia's tv channel Ten Network has shelled out \$2 million to show *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (remember that one?) ten times over ten years starting next September. George Lucas loves Ten. It paid the same price for *Star Wars*. As only to be expected, Grace Jones steals *Conan The Destroyer* from right under Arnold's triceps. As always, Grace is the best one-man show in town ... Walter Hill is hardly resting since *Streets of Fire*. He's into another 48 Hrs. style toughie comedy, *Tough Guys*, and then – the all-new *Magnificent Seven* ... Must have mentioned recently that *Greystoke* find Christopher Lambert's new French flick is called *Words and Music*. In French, that is. Official English title is *Just Like A Woman*. Huh? ... Anthony Higgins, the big, the only zero in *Under The Volcano*, joined Sting and Jennifer Beals in *The Bride of you-know-who*, just in time for a holiday. Shooting was stalled for two weeks in Carcassonne, in France, as Clancy Brown suffered an allergy due to his monstrous make-up in the equally monstrous sun. It takes Clancy four hours to do his make-up. Then, two weeks to get over it ...

CAMERA ...!

Warning! Don't be tempted by *Piranha Logic*. Nowt I do with our Joe Dante, Roger Gorman, New World or New Horizon. It is, in fact, a biopic of British poet Max Blagg ... Brian De Palma resting on his genre laurels after his sexy *Body Double* chiller. He's planning a movie about U.S. union leader Joseph Yablonsky. He's a character William Friedkin has tried to put on films for years ... Constance Towers, barely seen since her bald-headed furioso in Sam Fuller's *Naked Kiss* (1946), is back before Film City cameras in *Sylvester*. No, nothing to do with Sly Stallone ... He's out in Thailand doing *First Blood II* which, surely should be called *Second Blood* ... Hear tell that *Dragonslayers* Hal Barwood and Matt Robbins are into an sf horror special at 20th Century-Fox. *Alien II*? ... Also back in harness: Bob Zemeckis has, after all, got his old partner, Bob Gale, helping out on Leslie Newman's script of *The Shadow*. That comes of Zemeckis having clout called *Romancing The Stone* ... After her second Stephen King film, *Cat's Eye*, Drew Barrymore will become the American tube's *Alice In Wonderland*. Figures.

... & AKK-SHUN!

Funny, still no news of a radio *Return of the Jedi* serial from the Lucasfilm or National Public Radio guys over yonder. Taking their time, aren't they? Or is radio really dead? Not for me, it isn't ... Americans will have spent more than \$4 billion on movies this year ... Yes, well, maybe radio is dead. Over there ... Tough luck for Dario Argento. He couldn't get Linn Ullmann, Ingmar Bergman's daughter for his *Phenomena*. He started shooting in Zurich, instead, with Jennifer Connelly, plus Dalia Di Lazzaro (from *Flesh For Frankenstein*, 1974) and Daria Nicolodi ... Oh yeah, plus Donald Pleasance, of course ... Luc Besson, ace director of the French *Last Battle* film, has given up on Sting and Charlotte Rampling for *Subway*. He settled for Isabelle Adjani and *Greystoke's* Christopher Lambert. And he's lost me straight away. Ms Adjani is the pits ... So, yeah, maybe a subway's the place for her ... Paul Bartel is hoping Dustin Hoffman will star in his re-make of Alec Guinness' murder classic *Kind Hearts and Coronets* ... That is, if I remember, all eight members of a family, including an aged Tootsie.

MONEYPENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

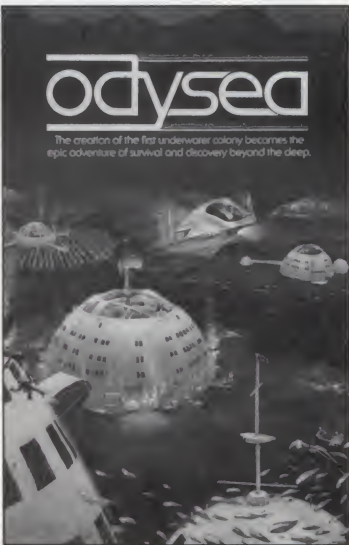
Lois Maxwell, who has been M's secretary, Miss Money Penny, since *Dr No*, has admitted she'd like to get married again. "But men find me too imposing. Do I give that impression?"

QUIZ ANSWERS

Get it? Got it? Good. Aha! Tricked you! Klaus Maria Brandauer was not the youngest Bond villain. Close. But not close enough. Brandauer was 38 when *Never Say Never* Again issued forth. Yaphet Kotto was 36 in Roger Moore's *Live and Let Die* debut in 1973. And the oldest ...? Oh, c'mon that's real easy. 'Twasn't Max von Sydow (53 as the last Blofeld), Gert Frobe (52 as *Goldfinger*), nor even Louis Jourdan (63 in *Octopussy*). Oldest heavy was the late Curt Jurgens as Stromberg in *The Spy Who Loved Me* – 64 when the film came out in 1977.

For (social security) record, here's the release-year ages of the other bad-dies. 43: Adolfo Celi as the first Largo in *Thunderball* and Charles Gray, the last Broccoli-Blofeld in *Diamonds Are Forever*. 44: Joseph Wiseman as Dr No. 46: Telly Savalas, Julian Glover, in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* and *For Your Eyes Only*. 48: Donald Pleasance as the first Blofeld in *You Only Live Twice* and Michael Lonsdale as *Moonraker's* Drax. And 52: Chris Lee as *The Man With The Golden Gun*.

Chris Walken was the best supporting actor Oscar for *The Deer Hunter* in 1979. And Roger Moore will be 56 this month.



Above: The promotional artwork for the ages old Sandy Howard project *Odysea*, which has been around the business almost as long as he has. Perhaps it'll get made one day (see "Sign of the Times").

Starburst Review Section

CONAN THE DESTROYER

"Insubstantial...
lightweight, but
mindlessly
entertaining"

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

The good news is that *Conan the Destroyer* is miles better than *Conan the Barbarian*. Happily it's a return to the more fantastic tone of Robert E. Howard's pulp stories and a move away from John Milius' ponderously vague existential approach. The bad news is that it is still far from capturing the true Cimmerian splendour Howard's tales evoke and dangerously skirts – and lapses into – hysterical parody. Let it be said however that nothing stops the film from being a mindlessly entertaining and engaging way of spending a couple of hours.

Conan the Destroyer picks up from the end of the first film with our hero still mourning the death of his first love Valeria. Now an expert thief, Conan is beautifully promised Valeria's return from the grave by the evil sorceress Taramis if he does her the favour of accompanying her daughter, the virginal Princess Jehna destined for sacrifice, on a quest to steal a fabulous jewel guarded by the jealous wizard Thoth-Amon. The jewel is the key to retrieving the priceless horn of Dogoth which Taramis needs to resuscitate this demon god. How Conan fares on this perilous journey with the usual motley assortment of side-kicks and how he gets the horn with the aid of Jehna – not my double-entendre, but the film's – passes the time quite nicely.



Richard Fleischer ably directs all this nonsense, full of stunts and touches of magic, at a fast and furious pace. It's my guess that he thought he could disguise the appalling script and dialogue. No such luck though! Schwarzenegger's acting certainly hasn't improved any since his last outing – not that it matters any as everyone else is just as bad as he is. The cast spout ludicrous lines and overstate the obvious to an irritatingly comic degree. The main problem with *Conan the Destroyer* is that when it's supposed to be funny – like Schwarzenegger's drunken scene – it isn't, and when it isn't meant to be – Olivia D'Abo's rendition of Jehna as a Mayfair debutante – it is!

Apart from disco diva Grace Jones' role as the warrior Zula, *Conan the*

Destroyer's main assets are some excellent special effects most notably the innovative miniature work by Emilio Ruiz del Rio. The less said about Carlo (E.T.) Rambaldi's climactic Dogoth though, the better.

The animated smoke bird that materialises from a crystal palace to steal the Princess, and the fight within this fortress's Hall of Mirrors do go a long way in summoning up some essence of the true sword and sorcery spirit.

But the decision not to become too heavy or philosophical makes *Conan the Destroyer* very insubstantial and lightweight indeed. It's a lot of harmless fun – but not much else. And it still doesn't hold a candle to *The Sword and the Sorcerer* which we all figured would put Dino you-know-who on the right route to realising the full potential

of this projected series. But that's another story... and maybe, fingers crossed, it will be third time lucky for true aficionados of the beloved Conan character.

Starring: Arnold Schwarzenegger (as Conan), Grace Jones (Zula), Wilt Chamberlain (Bombaata), Mako (Akro), Tracey Walter (Malak), Sarah Douglas (Taramis), Olivia D'Abo (Jehna), Pat Roach (Man Ape/Thoth-Amon), Ferdinand Mayne (The Leader).

Directed by Richard Fleischer. Screenplay by Stanley Mann from a story by Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway. Photographed by Jack Cardiff. Creative make-up Giannetto de Rossi. Produced by Raffaella de Laurentis. Time: 103 mins Cert: 15

DREAMSCAPE

"An engaging if
workmanlike paranoia
fantasy."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

Take a pinch of *Brainstorm*, add a dash of *Altered States* and the end result would be something like *Dreamscape*, an engaging if workmanlike paranoia fantasy.

It centres on likeable Dennis Quaid, a talented psychic, who is coerced into

Doctor Max Von Sydow's research in some very dubious areas of parapsychology. It concerns a way of telepathically projecting oneself into the dreams of a sleeping subject. Sydow and his assistant, Kate Capshaw (*Indiana Jones*' latest heroine), see this ability as a great step forward in the understanding of hidden psychological neuroses. Christopher Plummer, a mysterious top governmental official responsible for funding the programme, however, has a far more sinister aim in mind – one that becomes of intense importance when his friend, the President of the United States played by Eddie Albert, decides to enter a disarmament deal with the Russians. Quaid discovers these motives with

the help of a thinly veiled Stephen King schlock novelist clone and decides to act as the future of mankind is at stake.

Dreamscape is a very efficient piece of filmmaking that lacks any real excitement to emerge as wholly satisfying. Its concept is a good one and the perfectly typecast actors all perform to the best of their abilities considering the mediocre script. It just seems as if director Joe Ruben, whose credits to date lie mainly in the exploitation field, has failed to realise its full potential. The real pleasure of *Dreamscape* comes from the dream linking episodes which almost threaten to turn the film into a disguised Amicus-like compendium film. Within the political thriller framework we witness a harmless sex

comedy, a post-holocaust vision, an erotic interlude and a fully-fledged, all-stop-out horror nightmare. The latter is the best of all these as it deals with the distorted terror of a young boy's sublimated fear – visualised here as a Craig Reardon designed Snake Man, a partial stop-motion/Man in Rubber Suit effect.

In the over-view though, *Dreamscape* is a serviceable middle market programmer that is more likely to elicit the reaction "So What?" rather than any real emotive response.

Incidentally, *Dreamscape* not only has Kate Capshaw in common with *Indiana Jones* – it also shares the same censor-cut of a heart being ripped out of a living torso.

THE COMPANY OF WOLVES.

"An arresting visual treat."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

As the most adventurous film to come out of Britain in years, *The Company of Wolves* is something not everybody is going to like. But it is a movie that will almost certainly win universal admiration. Palace Pictures debut feature is an arresting visual treat which delves into the seldom explored darker side of the classic fairytale.

The entire film consists of a dream – and dreams within dreams – concerning the sexual awakening of a pubescent girl as she awkwardly matures towards womanhood. Here, in this dreamscape, the wolf epitomises every predatory male and we are regaled with high-class fantasies ranging from the horrific, to the sad, to the amusing

and the moving, but all representing the broad spectrum of human emotion one is recognisably vulnerable to during this painful period of adolescence.

The most remarkable aspect about Angela Carter and Neil Jordan's screenplay is not so much its audacity and daring but the fact that it works on practically any level and interpretation you would want to read into it. The symbolism is all there – the menstrual red cloak for example – but in no way does this get in the way of the basic narrative structure that operates on the most accessible of horror/fantasy planes.

There's a beauty and lyricism ever-present in *The Company of Wolves* that is winningly effective and purposely reminiscent of the more colourful output of Michael Powell. Some of the nightmares are realised better than others admittedly but Neil Jordan's fluid direction carries you through the rougher passages and dicey matter with ease. Every frame of this film has been lovingly produced and handsomely mounted – none more so than my favourite episode where Kathryn Pogson marries Stephen Rea only to find out that the worst kind of wolf is also hairy on the inside. ■



LE DERNIER COMBAT (The Last Battle)

"An arresting, poetic vision."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

Films rarely come more warmly received or critically praised than 25-year-old Luc Besson's *Le Dernier Combat*. All I can do is add more

fuel to those flames of commendation by advising you to see this arresting poetic vision of post holocaust Paris at the earliest opportunity. In its own way Besson's arrival on the French scene has just as much importance and impact as that of Jean Jacques Beinx, the *Diva* director.

Le Dernier Combat details the starker, more personal, side of the *Mad Max* apocalyptic coin. After an unspecified cataclysm mankind is still searching in a desolate wasteland, not for water or fuel, but for something of far more importance to the future of the human race – not to mention the well-being of the psyche. Four remnants of

civilisation cross and rejoin in Besson's bleak landscape to do battle for this sole purpose – one that only gradually becomes evident.

Le Dernier Combat is a film made in black and white sporting no dialogue due to poisonous gases released by the catastrophe rendering the characters' vocal chords useless. Besson's film therefore communicates with a raw reinforced emotion that is powerfully subtle. It is a far from silent film though thanks to the amplified Dolby sound effects and the atmospheric score by Eric Serra. The visuals show the same careful orchestration too and that's another of Besson's remarkable achievements.

A cerebral *Mad Max* then, that does take a few minutes or so to adjust to rhythmically. Nevertheless it is just as action-packed, although on a different, quieter level. Besson's trump card though comes from dealing with the now hackneyed post-nuclear concept on a more humanistic and touchingly wrought plane. It might have been the end of the world for these tragically related survivors but at least one of them makes sure it isn't the end of the world.

Le Dernier Combat's refreshing simplicity cuts through the lacklustre megabuck excursions of late like a knife to emerge as the most worthwhile genre film of them all. ■

Don't think that it's just Warner and Thorn EMI who've got the "big guns" in video releases - RCA run them a close race when in quick succession they can issue *Christine*, *Krull* and *Spacehunter: Adventures In The Forbidden Zone*. And before covering these three, I think it's timely to point out something that I've been pleasantly aware of for some time - the amazingly high technical quality of RCA videos. The clarity and definition of the picture really beats all their rivals (with the possible exception of Polygram) and makes the graininess of so much top quality software irksome indeed.

SPACEHUNTER-2D

Lamont Johnson's *Spacehunter* was a 3-D movie in its cinema incarnation, but like *Amityville 3-D* and other recent 3-D efforts, technical problems in the new systems (unlike 50s films) preclude a video issue in this form. Still, it's a lively piece of well-designed (and I mean that *literally*) space opera which bracingly rushes through its clichés to an unlikely ending, to the accompaniment of a boisterous symphonic soundtrack by Elmer Bernstein (nice to hear him scoring something other than mind-numbing comedies these days).

Peter Strauss plays the taciturn hero of a space epic that begins as if we're in for breathtaking starcraft/galactic hijinks, but then becomes more earthbound in *Mad Max 2* territory. Few surprises, but you'll certainly find this one worth a look - it's streets ahead of many other films bobbing in the wake of similar SF concoctions.

CARPENTER'S CAR

Christine, while not a return to vintage Carpenter delights like *Halloween* and *Assault on Precinct 13*, is almost the first of his films to bother about developing character (particularly Keith Gordon's "wimp into super cool" hero), rather than just pulling off brilliant exercises in technique - but they're here too, of course. And of recent Stephen King movie adaptations, this is easily the best. Oh yes - lovely final line too, spoken after a virtuoso climax.

I just wish I could find something positive to say about RCA's video issue of *Krull* - particularly in light of the coverage *Starburst* gave to the making of the film. But while director Peter Yates has a commanding way with action movies such as *Bullitt*, he demonstrates absolutely no grasp of fantasy, and *Krull* is a very earthbound effort, despite good special effects and a rousing score by the prolific James Horner. (But why not judge for yourself - enter the *Starburst* Video competition on page 14: Editor.)

POINTS OF VIEW

Here at *Starburst*, we're unlike those magazines that either have no opinion

Video FILE

Tape Reviews by
Barry Forshaw



Ken Marshall and Lysette Anthony, as prince and princess of a faraway planet, prepare to confront the evil Beast in the RCA/Columbia release, *Krull*.

on the films they cover, or keep it close to the chest to avoid losing favour with the film companies.

In fact, at *Starburst*, you may even find three opinions! In issue 59 editor Alan McKenzie cued a review of *House On Sorority Row* with the phrase "Poor Alan Jones reviews another so-so horror movie [if they'd stop makin' 'em, we could stop reviewin' 'em]!" Turning to the review, however, we find Mr Jones has put his hatchet away for this one - phrases like "promising debut" and "confident handling" occur.

Well, now it's ended up with yours truly under the unimaginative re-titling *House of Evil* (Media) and I find myself fence-sitting. It's true that De Palma protégé Mark Rosman has handled his over-familiar plot elements with genuine cinematic skill; (if you don't wish to know the plot, skip this sentence: This is the one about the mother who hides her deformed psychotic son, even after he begins to decimate the teenage cast.) And the suspense generated by Rosman's prowling camera is complemented by a tense, thankfully non-synthesised score (played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, no less). But the material is now so very familiar (even if Rosman does rip off some ideas used less in recent years - the vanishing body in the swimming pool from Clouzot's 1954 *Les Diaboliques*, for instance); still, if you feel you can take one more stalk 'n' slash movie, this is *one* of the most accomplished.

CHEAP THRILLS

The Mask, (Prestige) and *Slayground* (Thorn EMI) have one main point of interest each. The former is a low-budget 3-D shocker (originally *Eyes of Hell*) directed by Julian Hoffman. The linking story is totally dismissable, but the mildly surrealistic 3-D sequences have a certain imagination, despite the producer's limited resources. Terry Bedford's *Slayground* is a routine crime thriller distinguished by a remarkable, almost Argento-like visual sense. And if you can accept N.T.N.'s Mel Smith as a gangster, well...

ROUGH MIX

It's interesting to note that when a successful movie spawns a whole slew of imitations, it's more than just the plot which is borrowed. For instance, Roger Corman's production of *Forbidden World* (Embassy) displays its cheek by not only lifting its title (slightly altered) from one of the finest sf movies of the past, but appropriates both the plot and visual style of Ridley Scott's *Alien*. But if you can forgive this, director Allan Holzman does a workmanlike job, dealing out some effectively grisly shocks along the way. His two main problems, however, are a monster that borrows the snout and tusks of Giger's *Alien* design, but not the menacing nobility of that creature, and a rock synthesiser score that

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avoid video
turkeys...
starburst's instant
run-down of
what's happening
in your local video
shop...trust us!



HITS

1. Kureneko (Palace)
2. The Time Machine (MGM)
3. Frenzy (CIC)
4. The Travelling Executioner (MGM)
5. The Dead Zone (Thorn EMI)

PITS

1. War Between The Planets (VT)
2. Night After Night (Video Playback)
3. Castle of Evil (Video Form)
4. Terror of the Sea (Apple)
5. Blood Tide (Video Form)

ignores every precedent set in Jerry Goldsmith's brilliantly sinister score for Scott's film. (As an aside, this film crystallised for me the reason why rock scores so rarely work in underlining dramatic values: unlike Goblin's off-beat, bizarre creations, most rock scores lack the ability to "bend" with the dictates of the action—their up-beat insistence just ploughs on regardless.) In *Forbidden World*, moments of danger are constantly undercut by bright, relentless synthesiser work that has one wondering why the characters have switched on to some future Radio One.

Still, if you like *Alien* spawn, this is one of the most professional, with some nice touches (such as a half liquified corpse that grabs a hapless female astronaut, only to lose its grasping limb as she jerks away.) And a final note on video quality: a great number of dimly lit sequences, while undoubtedly atmospheric in the cinema, has the usual effect on video – frustrating high-invisibility. Hopefully, a new generation of directors will be thinking of the ultimate market for their product.

THE BLIND DEAD

Precision Video have issued Amando De Ossorio's two Spanish made *Blind Dead* shockers – films which prefigured in the early 70s two of today's trends – the inexorable undead of Romero and Fulci, and the unflinching presentation of the supernatural mayhem. The *Blind Dead* are, in fact, the revived remains of the Satan-worshipping Knights Templar cult who lost their eyes by either (a) having them pecked out by crows after hanging or (b) being burned out of vengeful peasants before immolation, depending on which of the two films you choose to believe.

Tombs of the Blind Dead has moments that are reminiscent of Bava as well as Fulci (a victim menaced in a hall of mannikins, eerily lit by a flashing red neon sign) and within its budgetary limitations, De Ossorio's movie keeps things moving at a respectably gripping pace.

The sequel, here retitled *Return of the Evil Dead* (I wonder why?) is even more fun, with the same disregard for character being balanced by lively scenes of menace and siege. The graphic effects in both films have been trimmed, but these are two chillers who might want to lay your rental fee down for – if you're prepared for the usual appalling dubbing and the fact that the work of Sam Raimi and co may make the gore effects seem rather quaint today.

As *Starburst* covers fringe material such as the Bond films and the *Indiana Jones* epics, and as I know our readers are not plugged into the fantasy/sf genre to the exclusion of all else, you'll forgive me if I mention the occasional video of special distinction not strictly in this magazine's domain: *Under Fire*

(Rank) is a taut and compulsive drama of reporters caught in the explosive conflict of Nicaragua. Roger Spottiswoode directs with a sharp eye to the tension; Nick Nolte, Joanna Cassidy and Gene Hackman star.

IT'S ALL TRUE!

Sometimes, you'll find a unanimity of response to a certain film that quickly whets the appetite to see it – such a movie is Michael Laughlin's *Strange Invaders*, now issued on video by Thorn EMI. And everything you've read about it – both in this magazine and elsewhere – is true! It's a pleasure to be able to wholeheartedly recommend a new sf film that perfectly balances plot, characters and special effects (all too many recent efforts are just a question of killing time between one technical trick and the next).

Laughlin's small scale movie (which nevertheless includes a star of such up-market connections as Louise Fletcher) is an affectionate homage to, and parody of, the great 50s sf movies, with the "alien takeover" theme orchestrated with striking skill. It's garnished with effects that brilliantly belie the modest budget. (Particularly imaginative is the shimmering blue sphere into which the aliens transform their luckless victims.)

All the above other critics may have drawn to your attention – I'll just add something nobody else has mentioned: notice how John Addison's pounding symphonic score underlines and increases the tension throughout. (It amazes me how critics so often

neglect the score, one of the most potent elements in a film's armoury of effects – I remember several lengthy reviews of *Jaws* and *Close Encounters* that made absolutely no mention of John Williams' stunning scores, both used in such an "up-front" manner that one would have thought it'd be impossible to ignore them!)

CHOP, CHOP!

Still, enough grinding of that particular axe. On to *Revenge of the Ninja* (Guild), directed by Sam Firstenberg. It struck me while watching this lively effort that the filmic Ninja, with his outlandish costume, athletic agility, fighting skill, gadget-laden utility belt and "billy club" is a close cousin of Marvel's *Daredevil* (or even the matrix of that superhero, D.C.'s *Batman*). Anyway, after a slow start, things pick up with a *Raiders*-style moving vehicle/hand-to-hand combat scene – the trouble is that there's no attempt to build the characters beyond the rudimentary, and censorship cuts seem to occur every few seconds (the fate of the film's "Mr Big" has vanished altogether).

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

From Brent Walker video, a double bill of the new *Hammer House of Mystery* series, (both directed by John Hough) *A Distant Screem* and *Black Canyon* (which I'll review next month, along with Thorn EMI's *The Dead Zone*). Entertainment In Video has *The Power* (a new movie, not the George Pal/Byron Haskin film). Thorn EMI also has

Dee Wallace and Danny Pintauro play mother and son, terrorised by a cuddly St Bernard, in *Cujo* (a new release from Guild Video).



Bloodbath At The House of Death. Nickelodeon has *Prisoners of the Lost Universe*. From Warners, *The Final Countdown*. Guild offers *Cujo*, while *Jaws III* arrives on the CIC label (not in 3D!).

BRIEF NOTICES

capsule comments by starburst video reviewer barry forshaw.

Watching the video of *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* (Spectrum) may give you a sensation of déjà vu – as soon as the gremlins plaguing heroine Kim Darby appeared, I remembered John Newland's film as a tv movie broadcast some time ago by ITV – as such, it's efficiently made and unambitious.

Mortuary (Hokushin) is a dull farago directed by Howard Avedis with a curiously philistine message – as soon as we find out a character likes Mozart, he's clearly "odd", "different" and, of course, the film's hidden psychopath. For punk admirers only.

The best and quickest way to appreciate how well-made an original film may be is to look at its succeeding army of rip-offs; with Jules Harrison's *The Exterminators of the Year 3000* (Media) all it takes is a quick mental glance back at Miller's *Mad Max 2* to see precisely what's missing from this clone. In a word: everything!

The video of *Star Trek II – The Wrath of Khan* (CIC) betrays the severely reduced budget of the sequel more than the cinema version – it now looks like a sleeker episode of the tv series. Still, there's much to enjoy, even if the superannuated cast (Shatner excepted) lack the sharp interplay of their younger selves. One of the plot ideas, the "Genesis" planet-seeding is a rare appearance of an adult, literary sf concept in a film.

A real curiosity is Al Beresford's *Scream Time* (Medusa): it comes across like a latter-day *Amicus* anthology film – three separate stories (filmed in GB) with a US-filmed "link" – all the tales outstay their welcome, but Michael Armstrong's screenplay furnishes some nice ideas, particularly in the opening *Punch and Judy* episode.

The Evil (Video Network) is a kind of supernatural re-make of Bunuel's classic *Exterminating Angel* in which a group of people find themselves unable to leave a house. In Gus Trikonis' film several effective jolts are ultimately undercut by a banal final personification of evil (played by Victor Buono).

It's Only A MOVIE

A Film Column by John Brosnan

Okay, apart from the script, the direction and some of the performances, what's wrong with *Supergirl*? I admit it's inferior to the *Superman* movies, even number Three, but it's not the absolute dog a lot of people have been saying it is. On the plus side it has a charming performance from Helen Slater as Supey herself (someone told me her voice was dubbed, but so what?) and some good special effects from Derek Meddings and company (colleagues complained to me that they saw nothing but wires throughout the movie but at the screening I attended I didn't spot a single wire; maybe they saw an unfinished print).

With a better script *Supergirl* might have ranked as one of the top fantasy films of 1984, even with the same

director, but as it is the script is the movie's main handicap—a lead weight that prevents it from ever taking off as it should. The writer, David Odell, who also wrote the screenplay for *The Dark Crystal*, seems to have absolutely no feeling or affinity for the subject matter—you get the impression that writing the thing was a tremendous chore for him. There is no sense of fun in what should be basically a fun film.

Nor is there any sense of inner logic in the plot; another sign that the writer was flying on instruments rather than personally coming to grips with the story. Take Argo City, for example, Supergirl's home base. Can anyone tell me where the hell that place was supposed to be located? Underwater? In another dimension? In inner space? And what were all those Kryptonians

doing there? How did they get there? How did they survive the destruction of Krypton? How did they know about Earth? How did Supergirl know that Superman was her cousin? And where did Supergirl's lookalike costume come from? If it wasn't for the thankfully distracting sight of Helen Slater's muscular thighs (like Christopher Reeve's biceps I presume they were furnished by David Prowse) I would have spent the whole movie wrestling with these unanswerable questions...

It's been many, many years since I've read a *Supergirl* comic (I think there were still dinosaurs around at the time) but if I remember correctly, didn't Supergirl and her family live on a large chunk of Krypton that had been blown clear in the explosion? Though the fragment had been turned into Kryptonite the people were able to survive, thanks to all the lead shielding covering the ground. But when meteors punctured the shielding Supergirl's parents sent her off in a rocket to save her life... Or am I thinking of *Superdog*'s origin?

I suspect that Argo City in the film was originally based on Kandor, the miniature Krypton city that Superman kept in a bottle in his Fortress of Solitude (gosh! it's all coming back to me! Kandor had been shrunk by a villain called Brainiac before Krypton exploded! It's amazing I can remember

these arcane comic book facts from the dawn of time when everything I ever learned about algebra is totally gone). But somewhere along the way the scriptwriter, or whoever, decided to "improve" on the concept and ended up literally in the middle of nowhere.

There are other annoying illogicalities in *Supergirl*, such as the reason for Superman's absence—a "peace-keeping" mission to a galaxy at the other end of the universe. If the place is so damn far away why does it need a peace-keeping mission? And how come Faye Dunaway even *knows* about the Phantom Zone, much less is able to exploit it against Super-thighs as a weapon? And the Phantom Zone itself is inconsistently presented; at one stage Peter O'Toole says he'll be trapped in the Zone forever but later when Supey is in there with him he tells her they'll be there until they die...

There are numerous other examples to show that *Supergirl* was merely thrown together on the drawing board rather than carefully thought out and the result suggests a blatant cynicism towards the audience. You get the impression the writer is saying, "The kids who like this sort of codswallop will swallow anything..."

Go, go, Ghostbusters

What a contrast *Ghostbusters* is! Here you get the strong impression that the

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SAME SWORD OF
CONAN

merges with

THE MIGHTY WORLD OF

MARVEL

for

CONAN

2

The Official
Comics Adaptation!



Be Here - The Best is Yet to Come!



In this touching scene Supergirl (Helen Slater) accepts the omegahedron from Ethen (Hart Bochner) and prepares for her journey back to Argo City.

writers, Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis (who both star in the movie as well) are in love with their material and have written the sort of movie they'd pay money to go see themselves. They also know their subject intimately – it's obvious they grew up with *Dr Strange* comics, H. P. Lovecraft stories and all the other source works that have gone into the *Ghostbusters* screenplay. The movie doesn't condescend towards its audience the way *Supergirl* does, in-

stead it has a sense of complicity with the audience which is extremely refreshing...

Ghostbusters will be covered in greater detail in future issues so I won't say anything more about it here except that it's the best "funny-horror" movie since *An American Werewolf in London* and that Sigourney Weaver is more beautiful than ever, even when possessed by Gozer the demon. It's a

shame that Columbia have decided to wait until December before releasing it here in the U.K. By that time the pre-release publicity will have reached over-kill proportions, which is a shame. *Ghostbusters* is not the greatest movie ever made but it is a hell of a lot of fun, and scary too. It's also wittier, more inventive and more imaginative than *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, but then so was *Splash*.

Likely to corrupt

A mystery has been solved. You may remember some issues ago I reported on the Lord Chief Justice complaining about "live cannibalism" in the video nasty compilation film that the police showed to the members of the House of Lords (as well as to the Commons MPs). Well, in the Summer 1984 issue of *Sight & Sound* Neville Hunnings writes that the police compilation included a sequence showing a live monkey having its brains eaten in an oriental restaurant.

Wherever this documentary footage came from it certainly didn't come from any of the 'video nasties', like *Driller Killer*, *I Spit On Your Grave*, etc, that all the fuss was about, and yet it appears to have had the most impact on the MPs, their Lordships, etc. What this means is that the police, by cleverly including a gruesome but irrelevant sequence, were able to ensure that Graham Bright's Video Bill would meet with very little opposition in either House, which is what happened. I think someone should pass a law now to protect our highly susceptible MPs from being manipulated...

By the way, the poor old Lord Chief Justice still got it wrong: "cannibalism" is defined as the eating of a member of one's own species. Eating monkeys doesn't make you a cannibal, unless you happen to be a monkey yourself.

INDIANA JONES— ALIAS HARRISON FORD

Okay, we've got the message. In response to a flood of mail after we mentioned Ye Editor's extracurricular project, *The Harrison Ford Story* (1984, Zomba Books), we've arranged to mail order the book for the benefit of Ford fans who've had trouble tracking down a copy.

The Harrison Ford Story is a large format soft-cover book of 116 pages covering the career of *Indiana Jones* star Ford, from his first appearance on the big screen as a bellboy in *Dead Heat* on a *Merry-Go-Round* (1966) right up to his triumph in the George Lucas/Steven Spielberg adventure epic *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

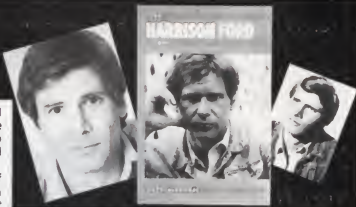
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One of the most effective musical soundtracks I've ever heard on a film is *The Fog*. I first saw the film at a Convention, where I spent most of it attempting to mend the projector, so really I didn't see much of the film at all.

The music is by the director, John Carpenter, who has also scored his other films, notably *Escape from New York*. Carpenter's dabbling with the musical side of his films has to be unique, I can't think of any other Director who writes and performs the music.

The music to *The Fog* is very sparse, most of the time it is a solo piano with a little melody that reminds one of a cross between *The Go-Between* and *Close Encounters*. Other tracks add synthesised church organ sounds and electronic thunders.

The record has been released by the enterprising Varese Sarabande label in the US, and by That's Entertainment Records in the UK. What I particularly like about TER's records, apart from the fact they fill in all the gaps with soundtracks the "larger" companies invariably ignore, is that you get a good selection of notes on the back. *The Fog*'s sleeve notes are by the composer, no less, and John Carpenter relates the story that *The Fog* nearly didn't get released as the first cut simply didn't work. Even when the score was added, it still didn't work, so the whole film was re-edited, some re-shot and re-scored, all in a month.

This one definitely goes down into my Top Ten soundtracks, and maybe one day I'll work out what the other 9 are! Touches of Carpenter's synthesiser scores sound a little like the work of the dozen of the electronic music score, Brian Eno. A founder member of Roxy Music, Eno left many years ago, and has worked with numerous musicians, from Robert Fripp to David Bowie. A number of albums have been produced, including his Ambient Series, or otherwise known as music for backgrounds. One of these, the most recent, *Ambient 4 - On Land*, I reviewed in *Starburst 49*. Not surprisingly a selection of his music has found its way into films, one album was even titled *Music for Films*, consisting of fragments. More recently he worked with film maker Al Reinert on the latter's story of the Apollo Missions, and this soundtrack, called *Apollo - Atmosphere and Soundtracks* is available from Polydor on Eno's own EG Records label. Eno is joined by his brother, Roger and Daniel Lanois and the album is in the usual Eno style, themes rather than specific tunes forming the majority of the tracks.

This record cover features some excellent artwork over a view of the Moon taken by Apollo 14, and definitely goes down on my list of recommendations.

Turning back to TER, and their recent releases, we come to *Mutant*. A sort of terrestrial alien, which the score bears slight similarities to. The score is by Richard Band who also conducts.

It's an interesting album, with many very short tracks. The longest is only 3 minutes, 32 seconds, while the shortest runs 52 seconds. I'm not convinced symphonic tracks work at this length, but otherwise, Richard Band has done a good job.

Audio DROME

Record Reviews by Mat Irvine

And now for a soundtrack with a difference. There have been many films without accompanying soundtracks—but now for a soundtrack without a film—at least I can't find anyone who's actually seen *Slapstick of Another Kind*!

Based on Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slapstick*, the film stars Jerry Lewis, Madeline Kahn and the late, great, Marty Feldman, which means it has to be a few years old. Even the music seemed to have undergone traumas as at least two composers are involved. The original score was written by Michel Legrand and when the film was originally released in Germany (so somebody saw it!) this was how the soundtrack was presented. Then the film was re-edited and re-scored and veteran composer Morton Stevens was brought in, so you get two soundtracks for the price of one. Side one consists of the Stevens' compositions, which are more lighthearted and quirky, also cartoon-like in places, while side two is occupied by the Orchestral Selections Legrand originally wrote. An odd record, especially as the film was never really released, but if you collect soundtracks with a difference you're not going to get one more different than this!

As I write this I haven't had the chance to see the latest Stephen King adaptation, *Children of the Corn*, so I can only comment

on the score as it stands by itself. Composed by Jonathan Elias who uses both orchestral and electronic sounds, it is surprisingly effective. Elias uses the musical arrangements very well, mixing orchestral and electronic to very good effect, and introducing a choral section in the style of Carmina Burana. This, unfortunately, is one of the record sleeves without full notes. I could have wished for more details—any details—on the composer, music and scoring.

The fifth record from TER features the film that could be said to be the Horror Film companion to *Dark Star*, *Evil Dead*. Both were made as college projects (*Dark Star* more so), by a relatively young crew, and both made originally on 16mm and only later blown up to 35mm for cinema release. Unlike *Dark Star*, the *Evil Dead* score is not by the film's producer, director and writer, but by Joseph LoDuca. Like *Children of the Corn*, LoDuca uses both orchestral and electronic scores, but unlike *Children*, I feel it doesn't work as well as an overall piece of music, or rather a selection of music. It fitted the film very well, and there is particularly evocative tracks at the beginning of side two, "Dawn of the Evil Dead" and "Not the Shower Curtain", both of which bring other films to mind! The third track, "Check on You", has to go down as the shortest

film track yet—21 seconds—unless, of course, you know different!

As I like to include a variety of recordings in this column, not just pure soundtracks, I'll end with a couple of non-movie discs. In 1976 the instrumental group, The Enid, produced a record titled *In the Region of the Summer Stars*. Containing such titles as *The Fool*; *The Falling Tower*; *Death - The Reaper*; *The Last Judgement* (a version of *Dies Irae*) and the title track, this record was one of those, like the original *Tubular Bells*, that became a standard. The recording was originally on BUK Records, although it later transferred to EMI, who then proceeded to delete it from their catalogue. The Enid, or rather two of the original members, Robert John Godfrey and Steve Stewart decided to make the record available again, and not just in its original form, they re-mixed it all, and even re-recorded side two completely. So *In the Return of the Summer Stars 1984* was born.

Lastly comes David Bedford, and a new recording. A musical colleague of Mike Oldfield, from way back when they were both members of Kevin Ayers band, Bedford's musical leanings have always been in the more—for want of a better term—classical field, while Oldfield went the rock route. He has produced several records of his compositions and worked on several TV programmes. His last record was way back in 1976, *The Odyssey*, and in my opinion, his best to date. The new record is on Mike Oldfield's own label, OM—for Oldfield Music, with Mike producing and engineering.

The two compositions are *The Song of the White Horse*, which was originally one of the TV pieces, written for an Omnibus programme, and the newer, more enigmatic piece *Star Clusters, Nebulae and Places in Devon*. It is a mixture of the down-to-Earth and the far distant, for the two choirs involved sing two lists, one being prehistoric sites that are scattered particularly in the Dartmoor area, and the other being a selection of—as the title suggests—Star clusters and Nebulae, all of which are visible with a small telescope. All in all an intriguing record, not one to listen to lightly as its appeal is not as immediate as, say, the earlier *The Odyssey*, but worthwhile nevertheless. There is a good cover as well, painted by Barry Atkinson, which manages to combine all the elements of the music into a single frame.

DISC DATA

The Fog, John Carpenter, TER/Varese Sarabande SV81191. *Apollo-Atmosphere and Soundtracks*, Brian Eno, EG Records EGLP 53. *Mutant*, Richard Band, TER/Varese Sarabande SV81209. *Slapstick of Another Kind*, Michel Legrand and Morton Stevens, TER/Varese Sarabande SV81163. *Children of the Corn*, Jonathan Elias, TER/Varese Sarabande SV81203. *Evil Dead*, Joseph LoDuca, TER/Varese Sarabande SV81199. *In the Region of the Summer Stars*, The Enid, original recording, BUK Records 660.005. 1984 recording, The Enid. *Pinnacle*, Enid 7. *Star Clusters, Nebulae and Places in Devon* and *The Song of the White Horse*, David Bedford, Oldfield Records OMT.



Over the past decade or so, the average science-fiction or fantasy novel has tended to get longer and longer. Once upon a time it was rare to find books bigger than 250 pages, but with the success of such writers as Stephen King and Frank Herbert, every publisher now appears to be seeking fat books which can be promoted as blockbusters. All too often this leads to symptoms of literary elephantiasis—books distended beyond their natural size by authors eager to increase the page count.

A prime offender on this score is *Otherworld* by W. A. Harbison (Corgi, £2.50), a novel about mysterious goings-on in the Amazon rainforest. A disillusioned priest, the son of a vicious landowner and a female photojournalist are caught up in the intrigue of strange lights that appear in the sky and are somehow connected with the elusive Yano Indians who live deep in the jungle. Harbison has written two previous long books, *Genesis* and *Revelation*, and this new offering weighs in at over 500 pages. It should have been much shorter. The author inflates his story by giving endless descriptions of the scenery which tend to swamp the reader of local colour; he also has his characters reflecting on their situations ad nauseum so that the story moves along at a snail's pace. *Otherworld* is competently written, but there's simply too much of it.

Also overlong is *Voyage from Yesteryear* by James P. Hogan (Penguin, £2.50), which comes with homely plugs from Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke naming the author as a new member of "the hardcore science fiction club". I can see what they mean: Hogan's novel is strong on plausible science but somewhat weak in the literary department. A human colony is established on a planet of Alpha Centauri and its inhabitants develop a non-competitive society based on free exchange of goods and services. Enter a starship from Earth whose crew are shocked by the lack of government in the colony and who attempt to take it over by force.

Voyage from Yesteryear does have its strong points, particularly in Hogan's creation of a society whose cohesion is founded on simple cooperation between people: it's an interesting idea which the author has worked out thoroughly. But the book begins badly with a lecture from one character containing woggles of background information. Later there's another expository lump on sub-atomic physics which goes down the reader's gullet like cold porridge. The writing is careful but uninspired, and it often verges on the dull. Overall this seemed to me to be a very old-fashioned tale which only sporadically flickers into real imaginative life.

Another novel which I felt was too long is *Heechee Rendezvous* by Frederik Pohl (Gollancz, £8.95). This is the third book in a series which began with the impressive *Gateway* and continued with the not-so-impressive *Beyond the Blue Event Horizon*. The Heechee are a mysterious alien race who are hidden inside the event horizon of a black hole, but in this book they are finally discovered and forced to emerge from

BOOK WORLD

by Chris Charles



Above: Thomas M. Disch, author of *The Businessman*. Below: The author of *Converts*, Ian Watson.



hiding. The main character in the series is Robin Broadhead, who was psychoanalytically by a computer in *Gateway* and who now discovers that his long-lost love,

Klarm, has survived being sucked into a black hole.

The novel is barely more than 300 pages long, but it feels much longer. Broadhead

himself narrates the story in a retrospective tone which somehow robs most of the important scenes of their drama or surprise. We ultimately learn that the whole universe is under threat from an unknown alien race whom even the Heechee fear, but even this revelation lacked impact for me. I've always felt that *Gateway* should never have spawned any sequels, and it's a pity that sci-fi writers always have the urge to relentlessly explore all the implications of their material until its mystery and romance has evaporated.

The Businessman by Thomas M. Disch (Cape, £8.95), is subtitled *A Tale of Terror* and is a horror story involving a murdered woman who is obliged to haunt the loathsome husband who killed her. Disch is an elegant and ironic writer, who throws in the ghost of a dead poet, a nineteenth-century actress, a spectral birth and much else to contrive several gruesome scenes which are genuinely chilling. The plot is intricate and implausible, as if Disch is mocking the traditional conventions of the genre. But this is precisely the book's weakness: it's far too clever for its own good. I've always been an admirer of Disch's work, but in recent years his writing has become more and more knowing, with an increasingly evident strain of misogyny. The result here is that the reader is constantly distanced from an identification with, and hence involvement in, his characters' dilemmas. *The Businessman* is a sophisticated confection, and there's less in it than meets the eye.

Converts by Ian Watson (Granada, £1.95) is about genetic changes which are induced in people, transforming them into a variety of superbeings from hulking brutes to butterfly-like creatures: the final shape is influenced by the individual's secret cravings. This is an interesting idea in theory, but Watson tells his story in a light-hearted, almost offhand manner so that it resembles the prose equivalent of a superhero comic strip. To my mind, Watson is too prolific, and this is a minor novel, for addicts only.

Hilbert Schenck is a name to conjure with, and his first novel, *A Rose for Armageddon* (Sphere, £1.75) is the best book this month. The story focuses on Hawkins Island, off Cape Cod, which is being studied by the computer-based method of Morphological analysis, every conceivable kind of data on the island being amassed so that predictions can be made about it. Dr Elsa Adams and Dr Jake Stinson are doing the study while the world about them gradually falls apart due to strikes, riots and much else. Elsa and Jake, both in their sixties, are old friends, but Elsa has a memory of a time when they were young and made love on the island, though Jake remembers nothing. Phantoms appear from the past, and at length an unusual spot on the island is located, to which Elsa and Jake travel. A very poignant and satisfying resolution follows. The story is slow-moving and sometimes over-sentimental, but it does have the hallmark of an individual imagination, not test in that its elderly protagonists are treated with sympathy and dignity. This is an impressive debut which bodes well for Schenck's future.

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